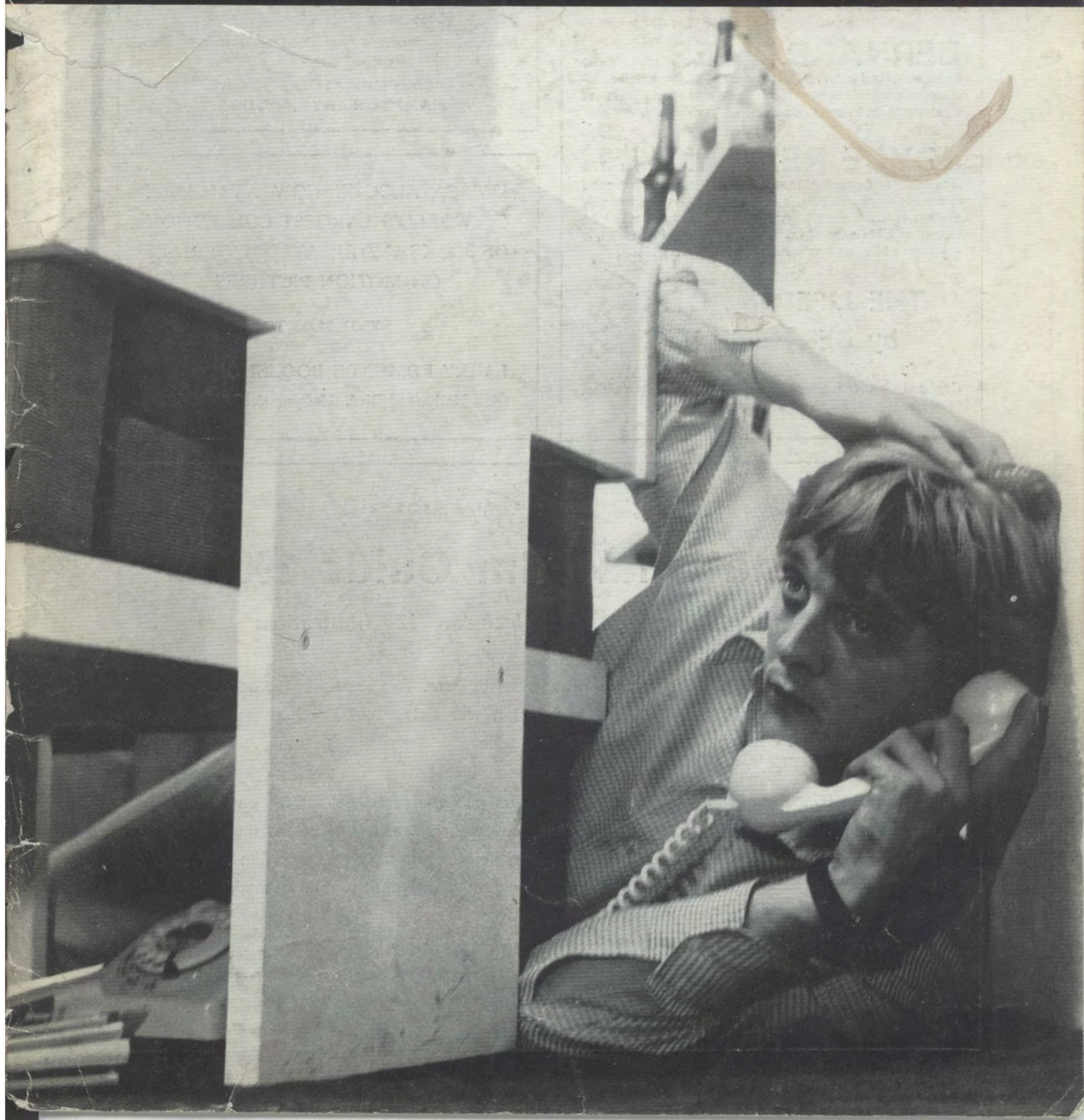


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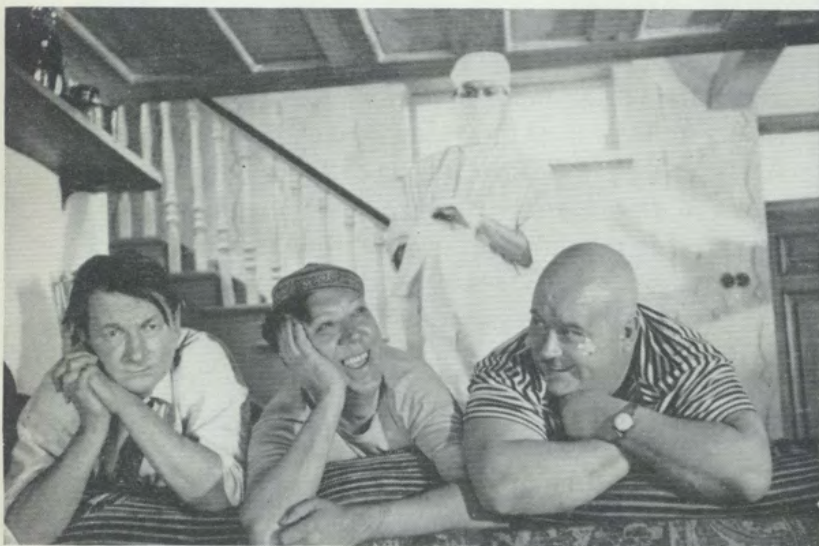
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SIGHT^{AND}SOUND

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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Editor: Penelope Houston Associate: Tom Milne
Designer: John Harmer Business Manager: Desmond Thirlwell

SIGHT AND SOUND is an independent critical magazine sponsored and published by the British Film Institute. It is not an organ for the expression of official British Film Institute policy; signed articles represent the views of their authors, and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

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WELLES



and FALSTAFF

an interview by
Juan Cobos and
Miguel Rubio

JUAN COBOS, ONE OF THE editorial board of the Spanish magazine *Griffith*, worked as assistant to Orson Welles during the shooting of *Chimes at Midnight*. Cobos and his colleague Miguel Rubio originally recorded this interview in English, then translated it into Spanish for publication. We are grateful to the editors of *Griffith* for allowing us to publish an edited version of the original text.

Chimes at Midnight is based on the Falstaff scenes

from both parts of *Henry IV*, with Welles as Falstaff, John Gielgud as Henry IV, Keith Baxter as Prince Hal, Jeanne Moreau as Doll Tearsheet. This is Welles' third Shakespeare film, and *King Lear* is among his several projects. More than ten years ago, however, as his interviewers reminded him, Welles told an Edinburgh Festival audience that he doubted whether there could be a happy marriage between Shakespeare and the cinema...

ORSON WELLES: When I made that remark I was trying to please my public. That was purely demagogic. I had to give a two-hour lecture to an audience which didn't like my *Macbeth*. I had to make friends with them, and the first way I could do this was to admit that probably I partly agreed with them about *Macbeth*. To an extent, that was as close as I could go in saying so . . . But for Shakespeare you mustn't make a museum. You must find a new period, you must invent your own England, your own epoch, on the basis of what you have learned through research. The drama itself dictates the kind of world in which it is going to happen.

In Chimes at Midnight, as in all your films, you don't give much value to landscape as such. There's a rather stylised and unreal feeling about it, so that a scene like the robbery at Gadshill ends up looking a bit like a set.

Oh, that's sad to hear. Really? Well, to an extent I wouldn't object to that criticism . . . to an extent. I may have to submit to the criticism, because it may be true, but I regret it if the country doesn't seem real. But it mustn't seem *perfectly* real. In other words, one of the enemies of the film is of course the simple, banal fact, the tree or rock that looks as it looks to anybody who takes a picture of his family through a camera on Sunday. So we have to be able to invest what is real, by reason of the photography, position of the lights, the conception, with a character, sometimes with a glamour, sometimes with an allure or a mystery which it doesn't have. To that extent it must be treated as a décor.

I feel that there is almost an aesthetic problem here, one which is almost never resolved in costume pictures. I don't know why I say almost: I would say never in the history of films, with the possible exception of some films of Eisenstein. Films which I don't particularly admire in themselves, but which have solved the problem that the real world outside—sky, clouds, trees and so on—doesn't seem to have anything to do with the décor. No matter how convincing the set, whether it's a real place or made out of cardboard, as soon as people in costume ride out on their horses it's suddenly banal, it's modern. You see a perfectly-made costume, actor wearing it correctly, everything is all right: he goes outside, and it's suddenly a location. You feel the trucks behind him and everything. I don't know why. In *Henry V*, for example, you see the people riding out of the castle, and suddenly they are on a golf course somewhere charging each other. You can't escape it, they have entered another world.

The only place where you don't feel this is in Westerns, and Japanese pictures which are like Westerns because they are a tradition. And it's a tradition in which the clothes, and nature and so on, have learned to live together. But I believe the problem can be solved, and I *think* I solved it to some extent in *Othello*, and more here. What I am trying to do is to see the outside, real world through the same eyes as the inside, fabricated one. To create a kind of unity.

The seventy minutes we have seen of your Don Quixote seems to translate just that ideal world which Cervantes dreamed for his characters.

That's the problem, isn't it? The people must live in their world. It is a fundamental problem for the film-maker, even when you are making apparently the most ordinary modern story. But particularly when you have a great figure of myth like Quixote, even like Falstaff, a silhouette against the sky of all time. These are people who have more life in them than any human being ever had. But you can't simply dress up and be them, you have to make a world for them.

You originally had certain ideas about the photographic look of Chimes at Midnight, a kind of grading which would give the images almost the quality of an old engraving. In the first print we saw, you used this for the credit titles, which came up over the characters present at the coronation. Why did you change this?

They weren't able to do it in the lab. It would have produced an extraordinary effect, I think, and it's my great sorrow that it hasn't been done. In fact, the film would have been lit in a completely different way if I had known that this process was likely to fail.

The Greatest Good Man

From reading the plays, one had the feeling that the film might have been gayer than you made it.

It's a very sad story: perhaps it should be happier, and that may be a failure on my part. But I also think that it is funnier in the English version than in Spanish. The Spanish version loses very little in the serious story, even though you can't expect a popular audience to appreciate that speech of the King on sleep unless it is an English audience. There is a density in what Shakespeare wrote that cannot be changed, and you must understand that every time you come to a speech of that kind you must fail except in English. You just have to sit still and say 'well, we lost it.' Luckily this picture only has one speech like that; but there are technical difficulties of translation for the jokes. All the same, the thing that most concerns me about the film and my own performance is that I am not as funny as I expected to be. That was part of what preoccupied me all through the shooting: the more I studied the part, the less funny he seemed to be.

Falstaff is a man defending a force—the old England—which is going down. What is difficult about Falstaff, I believe, is that he is the greatest conception of a good man, the most completely good man, in all drama. His faults are so small and he makes tremendous jokes out of little faults. But his goodness is like bread, like wine . . . And that was why I lost the comedy. The more I played it, the more I felt that I was playing Shakespeare's good, pure man.

I have played the part three times in the theatre and now in the film, and I'm not convinced that I have realised it properly yet. It's the most difficult part I ever played in my life, and there are at least three scenes in the film that I would like to do over again from my point of view as an actor. I feel he is a wit rather than a clown, and I don't think much of the few moments in the film when I am simply funny, because I don't think that he is. But I can see that there are scenes which should be much more hilarious, because I directed everything, and played everything, with a view to preparing for the last scene. The relationship between Falstaff and the Prince is not the simple, comic relationship that it is in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part One*, but always a preparation for the end. And as you see, the farewell is performed about four times during the movie, foreshadowed four times.

There is a wonderful moment after the play-acting at the tavern, when they are talking about Falstaff's banishment ("banish plump Jack, and banish all the world . . .") and the Prince says "I will. . ."

That's the clearest of all those farewells. And you discover in making the film that the death of the King, and the death of Hotspur, which is the death of chivalry, and Falstaff's poverty and Falstaff's illness run all through the play. Comedy can't really dominate a film made to tell this story, which is all in dark colours. But the basic thing is the innocence. The interesting thing about this story is that the old King is a murderer, an usurper, and yet he represents the legitimate idea. So Hal is the creation of a legitimate Prince who must betray the good man in order to become a hero, a famous English hero. The terrible price of power which the Prince has to pay. In the first part of the play, the Hotspur subplot keeps the business of the triangle between the King, his son and Falstaff (who is a sort of foster father) from dominating. But in my film, which is made to tell, essentially, the story of that triangle, there are bound to be values which can't exist as it is played in the original. It's really quite a different drama.

The film has become a sort of lament for Falstaff?

Yes, that may be true. I would like to think that . . . The film was not intended as a lament for Falstaff, but for the death of Merrie England. Merrie England as a conception, a myth, which has been very real to the English-speaking world, and is to some extent expressed in other countries of the Medieval epoch: the age of chivalry, of simplicity, of Maytime and all that. It is more than Falstaff who is dying. It's the old England, dying and betrayed.

The Magnificent Ambersons is also a lament for an epoch which has ended.



"CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT": AFTER THE BATTLE.

Not so much for the epoch as for the sense of moral values which are destroyed. In the case of *Ambersons*, they are destroyed by the automobile, in the case of *Chimes*, by the interests of power, duty, responsibility, national grandeur, all this kind of thing.

All your films are stories of a failure with a death in it . . .

Almost all serious stories in the world are stories of a failure with a death in it . . . But there is more lost paradise in them than defeat. To me that's the central theme in Western culture: the lost paradise.

The Shape of Poetry

Along with The Magnificent Ambersons, Chimes at Midnight seems to be one of the most personal of your films, perhaps because these two are the most lyrical.

Yes, I agree. I don't know whether lyrical is the right word, but there is a more personal feeling in those films, a deeper emotion. Yes, because people think of my films as being violent and sometimes cold, but I think *Ambersons* . . . this picture represents more than anything else what I would like to do in films. This question of 'an Orson Welles style' is all exaggerated anyway. I don't think that my films are dominated by style. I have a strong style, or different ones, I hope, but I'm not a formalist. The great majority of critics, whether they treat me well or badly, always treat me as a formalist. And I'm not a formalist!

How do you conceive scenes? They seem to be conceived rather like poems, with a kind of musical flow.

Music. Music and poetry. It's that rather than simply visual. The visual side comes out of a method of thinking, if thinking is the word. I hate to use pompous words like 'creating', but I'm afraid you have to. With me, the visual is a solution to what the poetical and musical form dictates. I don't begin with the visual and then try to find a poetry or music and try to stick it in the picture. The picture has to follow it. And again, people tend to think that my first pre-occupation is with the simple plastic effects of the cinema. But to me they all come out of an interior rhythm, which is like the shape of music or the shape of poetry. I don't go around like a collector picking up beautiful images and pasting them together.

Is that why editing is so important to you?

It's very central. I believe in the film as a poetic medium. I don't think it competes with painting, or with ballet—the visual side of films is a key to poetry. There is no picture which justifies itself, no matter how beautiful, striking, horrific, tender . . . it doesn't mean anything unless it makes poetry possible. And that suggests something, because poetry should make your hair stand up on your skin, should suggest things, evoke more than you see. The danger in the cinema is that you see everything, because it's a camera. So what you have to do is to manage to evoke, to incant, to raise up things which are not really there.

Do you think Chimes at Midnight does this?

That's what I am reaching for, what I hope is true. If it is, then I'm reaching maturity as an artist. If it isn't true, then I'm in decadence, you know? But what I am trying to discover now in films is not technical surprises or shocks, but a more

complete unity of forms, of shapes. The true form, the interior, the musical form of a picture. I believe that you should be able to enjoy a picture with your eyes closed, that a blind man should be able to enjoy a movie. We all say 'the only movies are silent movies,' but they have been talking now for forty years, so we have to say something in them. And when something is said, or a sound is made, or there is music, whatever occurs must have in it—just technically, I'm not thinking of poetry now, only technically—a shape which is immediately recognisable, so that you see that the whole thing has a shape, just as the image does. And the interior conception of the author, above all, must have a single shape.

Blows and Counterblows

Chimes at Midnight was originally designed to open with the assassination of Richard II and the landing of Bolingbroke in England. Why did you change this? The part of the Bolingbroke scene which was shot was full of extraordinary visual ideas—all the flags, and the future King waiting by the camp-fire, cold and hungry.

We shot one day on the assassination, and it didn't seem to me that the scene was sufficiently clear: instead of explaining the political background, it would tend to obscure it and confuse the audience. Also, four or five days work were necessary to complete it, and I didn't want to put the producer to that expense.

The Bolingbroke scene looked very interesting... but that's what divides the men from the boys, the people who can really do it from the others. What a director must have is a capacity to throw out his most beautiful shots. A film is often ruined, in my opinion, by a director who can't bear to get rid of something just because it's beautiful. Do you remember the shots of the two old men, Falstaff and Shallow, walking in the snow? Fine, marvellous shots, which I took out. Now, I could have indulged myself and had all the cinema clubs in the world say 'Look! How beautiful!' But those shots would have hurt the real, internal rhythm of the picture. And when things won't be as useful to the total film as you expected, then you must be willing to abandon them immediately.

When you were filming the battle sequence you shot longish takes, then fragmented them in the cutting-room.

On the first day I tried to do very short pieces, but I found the extras didn't work as well unless they had a longer thing to do. They didn't seem to be really fighting until they had time to warm up. That's why the takes were long, since there was no way of beginning the camera later and cutting. But I knew I was only going to use very short cuts. For example, we shot with a big crane very low to the ground, moving as fast as it could be moved against the action. What I was planning to do—and did—was to intercut the shots in which the action was contrary, so that every cut seemed to be a blow, a counterblow, a blow received, a blow returned. Actually it takes a lot of time for the crane to move over and back, but everything was planned for this effect and I never intended to use more than a small section of the arc in each case.

You edit very dynamically, breaking up your long takes with constant movement. Is that because you are apprehensive about boring the public?

Because I am so easily bored, I think the public probably is. You people who love the cinema are not as easily bored by it as I am. In other words, if I had to make films only for people who fundamentally love the movies, then I could be longer. But I would be false in it, because I believe that the point of boredom is very easily reached. If it isn't reached this year, it will be later. It's one of the things that dates films, that makes them seem old-fashioned, when you don't have the courage to keep it moving... I believe that films should be able to tell a story quicker than any other medium. Instead the tendency, in the last ten years particularly, has been to get slower and slower, and for the director to indulge himself in what you call visual ideas. If we don't have speed, I think we are basically betraying the medium. But nowadays serious directors are permitted to ask the public anything they like, at any length.

I do not like verbosity; I don't like wasted time. I like

concentration in every art. And although I know that I lose, that the public loses, a great deal because of the concentration, I also hope that somebody will see one thing and someone else will see another. I think you make a very thin movie if everything in it is going to be exactly clear. I don't want to criticise my contemporaries, but there are some directors who are considered very great who make one effect and only that effect. You can go back again ten times, and you will only admire exactly the same thing again. I don't think a film should be entirely evident: there should always be something else to see when you go again...

The last scene at Justice Shallow's house, in which Pistol brings the news of Hal's accession, was originally shot in one five-minute take. Then you intercut it with shots of the King's castle, breaking it up and losing some minutes of this scene of the old men in front of the fire.

I had a reason for that. I believe that as it is cut now, it tells the basic story better. If you are making a film in which you are not completely at the mercy of your narrative, then anything that is interesting can give itself its own length. The scene was in itself a good one, a little like a photographed scene from the theatre, and what remains now is what I thought was good about it. What was there before seemed to me to reduce the interest of the film after the big scene of the King's death. In other words, what you had was something beautiful, well-conceived perhaps by the director, admirable cinematically but not dramatically.

You sometimes do several retakes of the same scene on different days. Do you think the scenes over and decide on a retake without even seeing the rushes?

Yes. The rushes aren't important to me. I don't really shoot a 'retake' in the classic American sense of the word: a shot that has been studied by everybody and has been discovered to be wrong technically. I make a retake because my work wasn't good enough.

Sometimes you shoot a scene which seems perfect, and then do it over again. Is that because you think that there was something in it that didn't work after all?

Well, it wasn't perfect... You can only do that, though, where you are working on the same set. I never go back for a retake on a set that's finished with; that's a luxury I can't indulge in. In Cardona we didn't retake anything, because I had to finish John Gielgud's part in two weeks. I knew when he left that I would have all the work we later did with doubles. That wasn't second thoughts: I knew I would have to use doubles because I only had him for two weeks and he plays a part that runs almost as long as mine.

Orderly Disorder

When you are working, there is what you call a kind of orderly disorder on the set. The way, for instance, that you sometimes jump in shooting between one scene and another.



There are several reasons for that. First of all, sometimes what seems disorderly has a perfectly logistic purpose. But in order to explain why I'm changing the scene would take ten minutes of conference. So I don't explain, and it looks as though I am being capricious. When I'm outside, the position of the sun determines everything; I'll suddenly jump from one sequence to another, even go into a sequence that wasn't planned for that day, if the light suddenly becomes right for it. The sun is the most beautiful light in the world, and the way to make it beautiful is to film it at its moment; so that means jumping. Those are the technical reasons for the orderly disorder. Then sometimes the actors aren't right on that day, you see that they need another day, another mood. The thing isn't working. Then you must change, and the change does everybody good. Sometimes, when all the lights are in one position, in order to move logically to the next scene as planned creates an enormous waste of time. And rather than lose time in moving the lights, I confuse everybody else by jumping to the next thing I know we can shoot. I think you will agree that the disorder doesn't mean that we work slowly. I think it is terribly necessary to work quickly.

Sometimes, even if things aren't going very well, you shoot in order to get that feeling of improvisation.

We are always mendicants in the movies. To a certain extent we are standing with our hands out waiting for manna from heaven. Sometimes you shoot and see if God isn't going to put something on your plate. Sometimes He does, then you grab it.

Also, as you know, I'm in some ways a perfectionist, but in many ways not at all. When I've worked with ordinary commercial directors, people whose pride it is to be technically fast and efficient, they go over things, many things, more than I do. If I were directing the scene I would say 'All right, that's it,' because I always leave some rough edges. I don't believe that a movie is made, any more than a painting is made, by painting every leaf on the tree. I will work and work for a moment in an actor's performance, or wait and wait until the light is correct. But in general I shoot sooner and am satisfied

sooner. There may be an assistant director still running out, but I don't care. I go.

The great danger of filming is that 'all right . . . silence': the long pause, all those terrible formalistic gestures; then people try to pull themselves together and make a little moment that's true after it has been framed in this deathly mechanical silence. I try to keep a little of the feeling of improvisation and conversation . . . usually I have music on the set. I didn't here because of difficulties in the technical side of the organisation, the size of the picture, the costumes, the difficulties of my own part. I had to be much more severe than I usually am directing a picture. Almost always when I'm on set or on location I have music playing to try to make people think that they are not making movies—in the ordinary sense of the word.

And I don't pay attention, during shooting, to any department which may slow things up, because I have found that three departments—sound, continuity and make-up—take about an hour between them every day. And if you just don't let them talk, you've gained an hour's shooting. At the beginning I tell them: 'You are not going to enjoy this picture because you can't do your job. I'm not going to let you. So, stay, but know you are going to be a second-class citizen. You're just going to do the sound, and nobody will ever ask "Was that all right for you?"'

There was almost no make-up in the picture. I think it's *bad*. I almost never use it except to change the shape of a face or age a character. There's no make-up in *Citizen Kane*, except in my character. You take a poll of all the good cameramen in the world and ask them about make-up. I *promise* that you will get 98 per cent saying 'No make-up.' But they don't want to be responsible for hurting the jobs of the make-up men, so they let them go on putting on this stuff.

Quixote and Others

About your future projects. Are you going to make The Sacred Monsters?

WELLES, JEANNE MOREAU.





JEANNE MOREAU, KEITH BAXTER, WELLES.

I must wait. After the failure of Rosi's *The Moment of Truth*, the resistance of the world market to anything which has even the suggestion of a *corrida* is very strong. I will do it, but not for a couple of years. And I must find a way to conceal the bullfighting part of it so that the distributors won't be frightened. Mine is not a *corrida* picture, but the fact that people in it are following the bullfights is enough. You know the minds of people who finance pictures.

What about your 'Abraham' episode for *The Bible*?

'Abraham' is my script. They shot it. I wrote it. They asked me to put my name on the credits but I refused. I was originally going to direct it. They used almost exactly the script I wrote, but the end had to be changed because of the Church. I saw nothing in the story which meant that Isaac should be a willing sacrifice. So when Isaac sees his father with the knife, he runs, and the father has to chase him... It's a brutal, terrible scene. But it turns out that because of the theological conception that it's a pre-vision of the Crucifixion, it has to be a willing sacrifice. My argument to that was that even Jesus in the Garden says 'Take the cup from Me.' So I see a nine-year-old boy saying 'Take the cup from me' in his terms. But I couldn't win that argument with the censors.

You have talked about finishing *The Magnificent Ambersons* with two more reels, using the same actors as they are today. How is that project?

I don't know. I must find out about it, but I begin to feel depressed by all the things I have unfinished. But it would be nice to do. I talked to Joseph Cotten about it when I saw him in Rome... it may be possible to do... just two reels to make an ending which makes sense. It would be nice. Now the film has a silly ending... just ridiculous.

Then there is your *Don Quixote*. Is that made so simply because you were thinking of television, or is this your particular style for that story?

It must be simple, very simple... But everything about that film that was new is now old-fashioned. I have all kinds of stop action, speeded up motion and so on. They are going to say I stole it from the *Nouvelle Vague*, but I made it before them.

What is curious about *Don Quixote* is the dilemma Cervantes himself found with the character. You create a joke

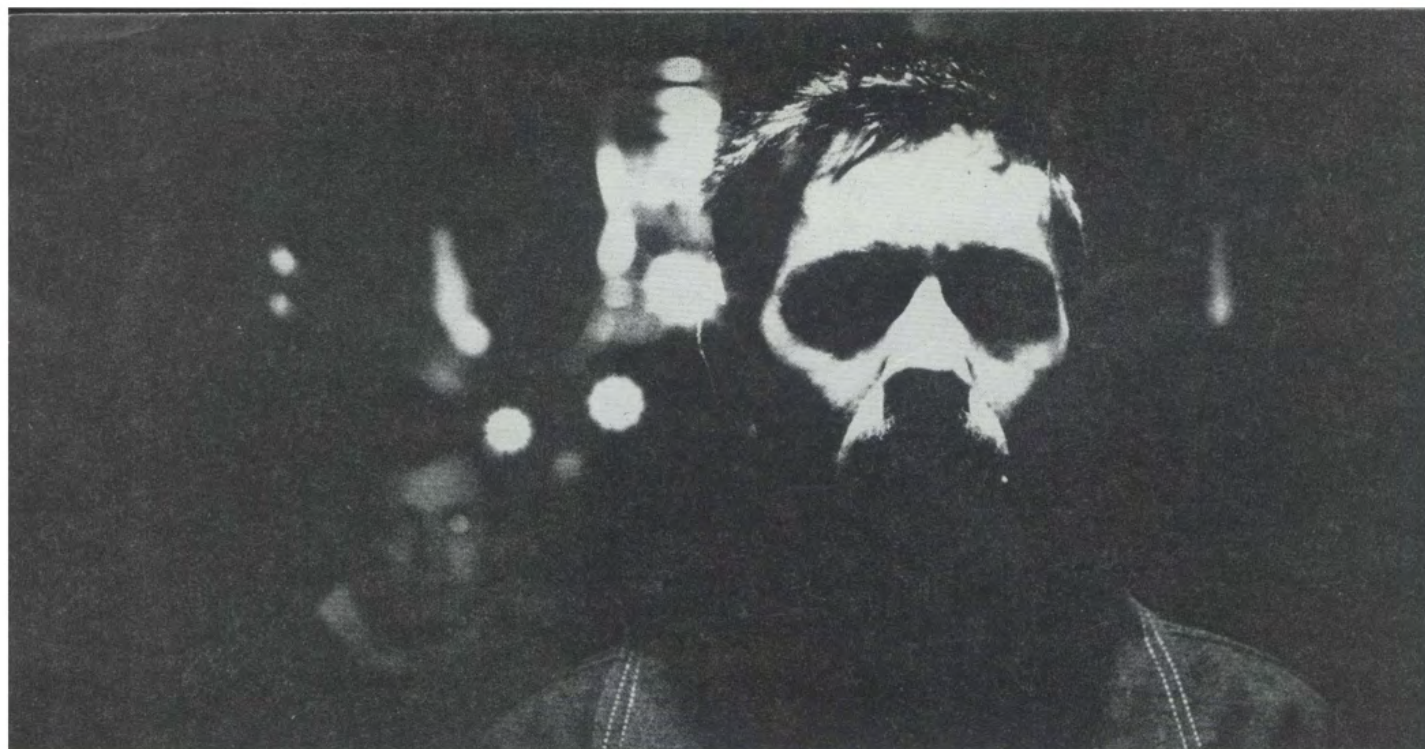
about an old provincial gentleman who goes mad on a certain kind of story and sets out to realise it. All right, that's a funny joke for a picaresque novel; but what makes it great is that whether he succeeds or fails (and he always fails), Quixote is defending the innocent, fighting evil. He may be reviving an idea which was ridiculous even when Cervantes wrote, but he ends up by not being ridiculous. That's what interests me about it. But because the picture is so delicate, it could very easily be very bad.

Just what do I add now? That is the problem. I have a purely picaresque thing, a series of sequences, and I have to make a whole picture out of it. I feel I must exploit the modern world, and then it becomes so banal. I want to present the characters with modern times, so to speak, and yet not to make the cliché of modern times.

I shouldn't sit in Spain and give an opinion about *Quixote*, but I am absolutely convinced that Cervantes conceived it as a short story: one joke and that was all. Then the two characters seized their life and led him, with a vitality that surprised him and continues to surprise us. That's the point of the film: that they have a life I can't stop as a film-maker either. They lead us. They are not marionettes, they are curiously independent. The thing I haven't solved in my mind about Quixote—and it worries me, and I work on and on—is that I have him existing in the modern world. I understand all that; but it seems to me that I am perhaps not being true to reality, to the moral reality of the situation, because the modern world must destroy him. And yet I can't imagine him destroyed.

Has all the writing about your films, all the critical appraisal directed at them right from the beginning, ever stopped you making some film out of fear for your career?

Not the writing: no, no. I don't care about the big things they write about me. I don't live like that. What they write about me doesn't affect my life, but I know that my films have some importance for people in various parts of the world, and that what I say on films has some importance for some people, and therefore I must try to be responsible to that position. But not to the critics: I am in no danger of changing my position because somebody writes a serious thing about me. I began seriously, thinking of myself as seriously as any writer has ever taken me. More so, alas!



Gilles
Jacob

CHRIS MARKER AND THE MUTANTS



STILLS FROM "LA JETEE".

CHRIS MARKER IS A PERSONALITY no less fascinating than elusive. About the man himself we know little: that he was born in a suburb of Paris one July day in 1921, but has allowed a legend to grow about his birth "in a far country"; that the name Chris Marker is only one of half-a-dozen which Christian François Bouche-Villeneuve has at various times assumed and discarded. Something of a scholar, *maquisard*, pianist; successively and simultaneously journalist, writer, photographer, filmmaker: he invites as many definitions as he has had changes of identity. One thing is certain: that this rabid reader, admirer of Giraudoux, devotee of comic strips and science fiction, is an intellectual (of the Left) and a great traveller, attracted in turn to Africa (*Les Statues meurent aussi*), Finland (*Olympia 52*), China (*Dimanche à Pékin*), the Soviet Union (*Lettre de Sibérie*), Korea (*Coréennes*, collections of photo-journalism published by Editions du Seuil), Israel (*Description d'un Combat*), Cuba (*Cuba Si*), France (*Le Joli Mai*), Japan (*Le Mystère Koumiko*).

* * *

With *Coréennes*, and the *Petit Planet* series which he edits for Editions du Seuil, he was the first to work correspondences between the arts of layout and filmmaking, adapting the techniques of montage to the printed page. For the moment let us say that Marker is a writer-cinéaste, unless it ought to be the other way round. Which is to say that for him the image and the word are of identical value. Chris Marker writes with his camera; and he writes from anywhere in the world where there is evidence—evidence for those acute, passionately partisan reportages which seek to pin down a changing human situation in the anguish and lucidity which spring from an experience of our world.

But if Marker is a committed artist who has had his clashes with censorship (*Les Statues meurent aussi*, which he co-directed with Alain Resnais, *Cuba Si*), his aim is not to teach, to offer proofs, or to draw up a charge-sheet. How could he, and in the name of what objectivity, after light-heartedly demonstrating in *Lettre de Sibérie* that, no matter how honest, with slight changes in the commentary, *objectivity* can use the same image to show happy labourers, unhappy labourers, or simply Soviet labourers? If Marker is true to his encounters with Mao's China, Khrushchev's Russia, Ben Gurion's Israel, Castro's Cuba, it is because he seeks to seize, within the same image, within the tension between past and future where a glance backwards reveals the promise of things to come, a vision of nations evolving in a world of evolution. (A vision, incidentally, in which *Le Joli Mai*'s inquest on a France dormant under de Gaulle is not the least of his paradoxes.) For Marker, everything is provisional, and changeable. Rather than offering clear-cut analyses or film demonstrations, he studies problems in motion, acutely aware of their dynamism. He is careful not to limit himself to a single place or time: "This autumn could be Ermenonville or New England." "It is one minute past seven, and a lorry from Irkutsk rattles across a pontoon bridge at the very moment when a truckdriver's horn rouses 211 sleepers in Dijon" (*Lettre de Sibérie*). And behind the acid but fraternal gaze of this polyglot

globe-trotter, there lies only one moral: "At the end of the journey, there is friendship: the rest is silence."

One of the keys to Marker might be this human sympathy—a sympathy barely masked by the varnish of quirkish ironic humour, which has only to flake off a little to reveal the naked sensibility beneath. Another key is meditation on history—not History in its dusty fixity but life in the process of becoming history and not yet aware of it: the ordinary and everyday seized on the wing without bothering about perspective, and tamed without worrying whether the rays of sunlight glinting on a Haifa suburb are more "historic" than a calm and copious statement by Castro, or whether there's more history in these birch woods and frozen plains than in Salan's behaviour at his trial. "History is a tiger which devours Koumiko," writes Marker, "but she is the tiger . . . She knows that she isn't making history, but she *is* history, like you, like me, like Mao Tse Tung, the Pope, and the little raccoon."

In all his work, Marker is looking for a form of logic and reasoning which will reject the given condition and ruffle the audience's expectations. And what interests him above all is the mixing of tenses—the blending of Time, where the past is so close that it looks like the present passing itself off as the past to the future. These are not just aggressively dazzling intellectual games through which Marker's unquiet spirit traces some wild graph: in looking at the world, at the way it changes, he is also looking for us and for himself.

So one finds in *Olympia 52* the symbol of a world no longer corseted by absurd frontiers, but recreating antique beauty through physical effort; and in *Les Statues meurent aussi*, colonialism gnawing away at the deep tap-roots of art. Elsewhere, a Yakut draws his bow, and in the next shot a rocket is launched (*Lettre de Sibérie*); a young Israeli girl sketches interminably, and two owls are brought face to face with an oscilloscope (*Description d'un Combat*); a mountaineer-painter uses the hillside as a canvas for his frescoes (*Cuba Si*). And in stressing such contrasts and contradictions, in bringing together the old and the new, ears pricked for some remote tremor on the face of the earth, the essayist doubles as moralist in an attempt to unravel threads of human destiny from a bric-à-brac of facts and fragments.

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Anything may turn up in Marker's beautiful, unaccountable films. As Raymond Bellour has written: "One meets, here and there, puppets, news items (real or imaginary), animated cartoons, advertising films, André Gide and owls, Armand Gatti and cats, signs and symbols, the traces of a man who calls himself Chris Marker." One might add that the purely cinematographic effects—colour broken from time to time by paragraphs in black and white, shots in black and white printed from colour negative, colours specially toned in the labs (*Lettre de Sibérie*)—not only accentuate the individuality of a poem which connects above all through its soundtrack, but also punctuate the chain of impressions with a series of digressions, bits of nonsense, jumps in time and space, all following the wayward thread of thought.

One sees more clearly now how much Marker's art is that of an *auteur*, and how far this "documentary director" is from objectivity. From the first line and the first shot, the tone is set: "I write to you from a far country . . ." This camera which says "I" is no accident: Marker's is the cinema of the personal pronoun, first person singular; and his standpoint of a man alone is that of a free man who loves beauty and mistrusts fine phrases. Rejecting the restrictions of classical structure, Marker recognises only one dramatic unity: the commentary. At the opposite extreme is someone like Reichenbach, who insists that the image should be self-sufficient, that the most completely successful text is simply a pastiche of the images, a kind of tracing superimposed on them. The implication here is the inadequacy of commentary used as an alternative to the images; and hand-in-hand with this criticism goes the reproach that too much verbal subtlety in the script monopolises the attention.

But it seems to me, on the contrary, that in Marker's films the commentary expresses the governing idea, linking, propounding, explaining, giving shape, creating counterpoint rather than pleonasm, in elusive balance with the image. Though on occasion irritating, his virtuoso manipulation of language *à la* Giraudoux incurs no dilution in polemic power. Rather it acts as a sounding-board for his inquiring camera, bringing an element of distanciation into his portrait-criticism, and employing ellipse, epigram and preciousness to effect a fusion of text and image. Better still, this virtuosity can come to the rescue of images which, because of a hurried visit (*Cuba Si*) and inadequate footage, might otherwise seem superficial and inconsistent. I'm well aware that, politically speaking, one can question the power and efficacy of a view which denounced American capitalism and the Bay of Pigs landing by means of a few shots of greedy alligators, and had no qualms about transforming a military march past into a crazy conga rhythm. I would retort that the Castro interview is the most enjoyable part of the film, though it is presented with unvarnished simplicity.

* * *

The truth is that the Marker Touch, which turns a rough montage of assorted footage into a dynamic assembly of genuine sequences, owes more to what Marker himself has strikingly described as "involved objectivity" than to any determination to persuade at all costs through images which can be made to tell whatever story one chooses. And if truth should undercut sympathy (the execution of anti-Castro rebels in *Cuba Si*), that's just too bad.

In many ways, the experience of *Joli Mai* demonstrates the gamble and the fixed limit of this "involved objectivity": a gamble won with the Algerian, the African student, the worker-priest turned militant trade unionist, the coal merchant talking about "sympathie" (the best fragments of the film); a limit reached with the questioning of the lovers, the young right-wingers, the girls of the 16th *arrondissement*. Are these people really stupid? Or is it just that they seem stupid, in so far as their position of inferiority in front of the camera makes them look "like the fools they may not be"? For my part, and although it is nowhere explicit, I think one can see dawning—beneath that human sympathy I mentioned earlier—something like misgiving about the proliferation of this feeling among so many similar people, all finding so much difficulty in expressing themselves. Is not "To

the Happy Many", that anti-Stendhalian dedication of *Joli Mai*, addressed to people who are happy in being many, but whom one would wish to see many in being happy?

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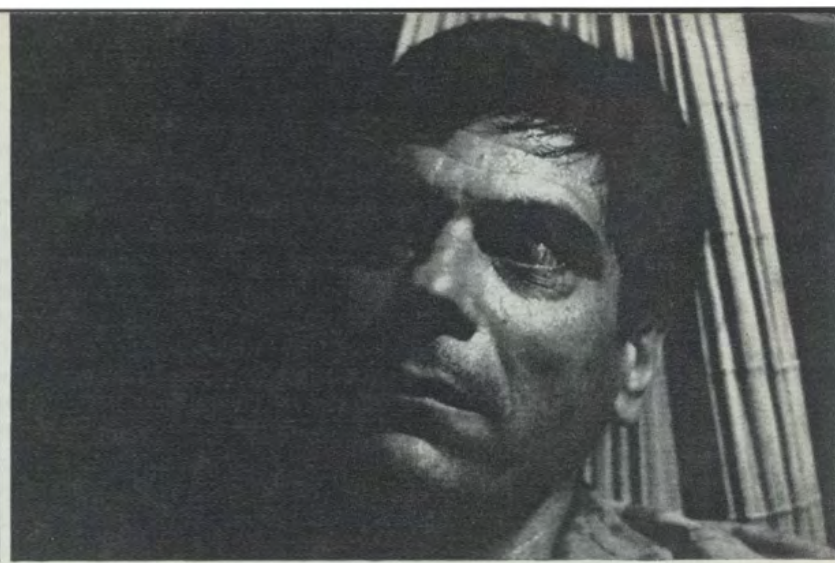
After Marker's uninterrupted voyage around our world and our age, *La Jetée* came as something different: an interrupted voyage through space-time. In the previous films, the pleasure to be experienced was above all cerebral—though in both *Description d'un Combat* and *Cuba Si* there were traces of a lyricism formerly absent from Marker's work. *La Jetée* is stunningly successful, a short story whose beauty packs a strong emotional charge. In this 29-minute film, which makes nonsense of the usual distinctions between short and feature, Marker's surface brilliance is replaced by a deeper visual imagination, the style and power of tragedy harnessed to a story of flawless simplicity.

"La Jetée" stands for both the pier of Orly airport and the launching of a man into space-time. A child is out walking with his family on a Sunday at Orly: he is struck by the beauty of a woman's face, and soon after, a man dies. This opening is the childhood memory of the hero, who does not yet know that he is this man, that it is his own death (in the future) that he has witnessed, and which will only happen because once he reaches the future he will be able to look backward into the past.

We are in the era of the Third World War, "after the destruction of Paris", evoked by a handful of horror shots and a fine collage showing the Arc de Triomphe ripped in two by the bombardments. In this ravaged Paris of the future, strange German-speaking torturers devote themselves to terrifying experiments, searching for a human guinea-pig who has some memory so vividly anchored in his mind that it can serve as a springboard for a journey. Their aim is "to project envoys into time, to call the past and the future to the aid of the present." Because he retains such a memory, the hero is to be projected into the past, towards the girl he loves, or towards the ghost he thinks he loves. For longer and longer periods of time, always punctuated by a return to a present which is the future for the past and the past for the future, and which finds him suffering mysterious injections stretched on his hammock of pain . . . for longer and longer periods the man is reunited with the girl, now in a sunlit garden, now in the room where she sleeps (the key point of the film), now in a museum crowded with stuffed, immortal creatures. When he is sure of his love, the experiment is ended: he is now ready for the future, "better defended than the past."

The men of the future merely offer him a source of energy which he brings back with him. Now useless, having played out his part, he waits only to be liquidated. But when the men of the future—who themselves travel in time—suggest that he escape with them, he refuses. He wants to regain "the world of his childhood, and the woman who may be waiting for him." He finds her again on the great pier at Orly, and watched by the child who is himself, is killed by a guard who has followed him. So as the story comes full circle, the loop of time is looped. And in this idea of a man who is able to travel in time through his own fixation on a memory, one rediscovers a favourite Marker theme: the exploration of a subjective world—if Nerval was right when he wrote that "one travels only to verify one's dreams." So it was that in *Dimanche à Pékin*, Marker began with the evocation of a childhood memory, in the Alley of the Ming Emperors.

To challenge logic through the paradox of time is not a simple matter. Marker has brought it off, thanks to an almost classical elegance, a perfect structuring and control of the film's mechanism, and an intelligently unconventional handling of the science fiction element. The men of the future,



"LA JETÉE": THE TORTURERS AND THE TORTURED.

for instance, are not three-eyed Martians with waving antennae, and the only extraordinary creatures—a touch of mischief, this—are the prehistoric animals in the museum. The fact that we are not confronted with a world with which we have no point of contact is one reason why *La Jetée* has the power to move us. The voyage to the future is summed up with rare discretion in a few shots, a network of abstract lines reminiscent of certain Henri Michaux sketches; and in its evocation of the future itself, the film is carefully imprecise, both realistic and unrealistic. Beings against a black background; people like us, but with foreheads branded as though with the caste-marks of some unknown planet; and quasi-supernaturally lit so that we recognise our notion of the future in their "difference". Nothing picturesque; no futurist settings. And what purpose would they serve, when this vision of pain surely demonstrates that the monsters are among us? It takes incredibly little to do the trick: electrodes, eyes masked by wired eye-shades, the strings of a hammock gnawed in agony, weird stereoscopic spectacles, guttural whisperings, the beating of a heart.

* * *

By electing to use stills to embody the terror and immobility of death, Marker prolongs the rigour of his conception. For the technique employed in this photo-novel is as original as it is perfect for its purpose. We are a long way from the *roman-photo* of the station bookstall where actors have been photographed in pre-arranged poses. Here, actors are frozen in motion, and paradoxically it is the freezing of the image which evokes the sense of life—halted but always on the point of movement. Only one image brings movement right into the

frame, for six seconds: when the sleeping girl, surprised as she snuggles in bed while the birds twitter, blinks slowly as she awakens to smile at the man she loves. A defiance of logic, an exception to the rule, this is the one moment in the film when the convention of the frozen shot is broken: a stroke of genius whose beauty is intensified just because the moment is unique. In the next shot, the birds are now stuffed, and the girl once more motionless. This tiny flash of pleasure in living, the only one to elude surveillance, is all that the mind has been able to grasp of life.

Unlike Robbe-Grillet, who leaves one with the feeling that his characters are fixed for all eternity, Marker's art in *La Jetée* is to intensify the impression of life, as a sculptor might. Moreover, the static quality of the images suggests the stratification of memory. To remember something is to halt time. And *La Jetée* is a film about time, the only escape route open to the survivors of the Third World War. So Marker has edited his work as a film of which he has kept only one twenty-fourth of each second, but with that fragment of time prolonged for as many seconds as he needs. Time is controlled at will, by the length allowed each frozen twenty-fourth of a second, with the normal techniques of speeding-up and slow motion relegated to the prop shop.

Only such a boldly planned choice of stills could convey so tangibly a sense of the inevitability and transience of this love affair between lovers separated by their existence in different time spans. And Marker's editing, alternating sections in past or future time with shots of the busy doctors, the suffering patient, the progress of the experiment, gives full weight to the cost paid in physical suffering, and the man's

pitiful efforts to rejoin his beloved: and in the end he dies while running to catch up with his impossible dream.

At the same time the use of stills is not the whole answer: Marker plays consciously and tenderly with gestures which might have been created by a great portrait-painter—as when the girl is sleeping, or when during the visit to the museum she sweeps her hair off her neck under the forbidding stare of mummified cats, or hides her mouth to laugh, or points with lifted finger at a bird with outstretched wings—beautiful, spare moments evoking the fragility of happiness. He also employs all the technical resources he has so thoroughly mastered: framing, length of shots, the blacked-out screen, dissolves, sound effects, tracking (with the hero at the crucial moment when, appearing in the same shot as the girl he has managed to attain, he triumphs over time), reverse angles (in the scene of the felled sequoia tree, when she murmurs “Hitchcock”, undoubtedly in tribute to the creator of *Vertigo*, another story of a man obsessed by the image of a woman he can never bring to life), close-ups (the scene in the garden), the rapid editing of flash shots at the end. The adroitness and fluency of this syntax, the very simple but weird decors, and the tone of one of Marker’s finest commentaries (a marvellous use of the past simple, “Et quelque temps après *vint* la destruction de Paris”), all combine to make this poem of love a fable on the search for happiness.

Elsewhere the poetry might seem too intellectual, but here the magic incantation has no need of argued explanation. But if rationalists insist that *we* are a key to this terrifying game played by man between present, past and future, let us say that if modern man is in the process of conquering space, his intelligence is powerless to conquer time or the mysteries of life and love; and so the sorry experiments of the torturers (to which Marker lends no scientific importance) seem no more than derisory.

It is madness to attempt to recapture through the adult intelligence a childhood glimpse of love, to find oneself bereft of love because one has preferred to *know*. Above all, in this science-fiction tale, which is not so far removed from the fairy tale of childhood with its final greeting to the men of the future, there emerges the theme of man as powerless to dominate nature. In the days of the pack-mule, man dreamed of the magic carpet; in the days of interplanetary rockets, there is no point. The reaction of man today is a projection of his secret desires and fears. What will become of love in a world of robots? How can one fight the inexorable passage of time, the threat of old age and death? “To wake up in another age, to be born again a second time, as an adult . . .” To ask this, for a man like Marker, eager for time “doubly lived,” receives its own answer: “He understands that one cannot escape from time.” One cannot reject the future, because the future is our own death, which we are creating every second.

* * *

Aloof and untouched by fashion, in film after film Marker patiently tracks the faces of women, living emblems of happiness. From the girl in Haifa to the heroine of *La Jetée*, from the Siberian mammoth to the dead hippopotamus in the museum, an alert intelligence circles and vibrates, affirming its involved objectivity. And to those who may still have wondered, *La Jetée* surely proves once and for all that Marker must be numbered among the *auteurs*. His eye is fixed on the conjugation of time, on the mutation of man, for whom “. . . there is neither destiny nor ill-fate, only forces to overcome.” “Soon darkness will cover those men who try to come to terms with the world, leaving the light to those who wish to change it.” Observing man and history, observing the future as it matures in the present, Marker not only watches but wonders: perhaps, by contagion, he might conjure the same wonder in us.

“LA JETÉE”: THE WOMAN'S FACE AS THE MAN REMEMBERS IT, HIS “SPRINGBOARD FOR A JOURNEY”.



IN THE PICTURE

Dutchman

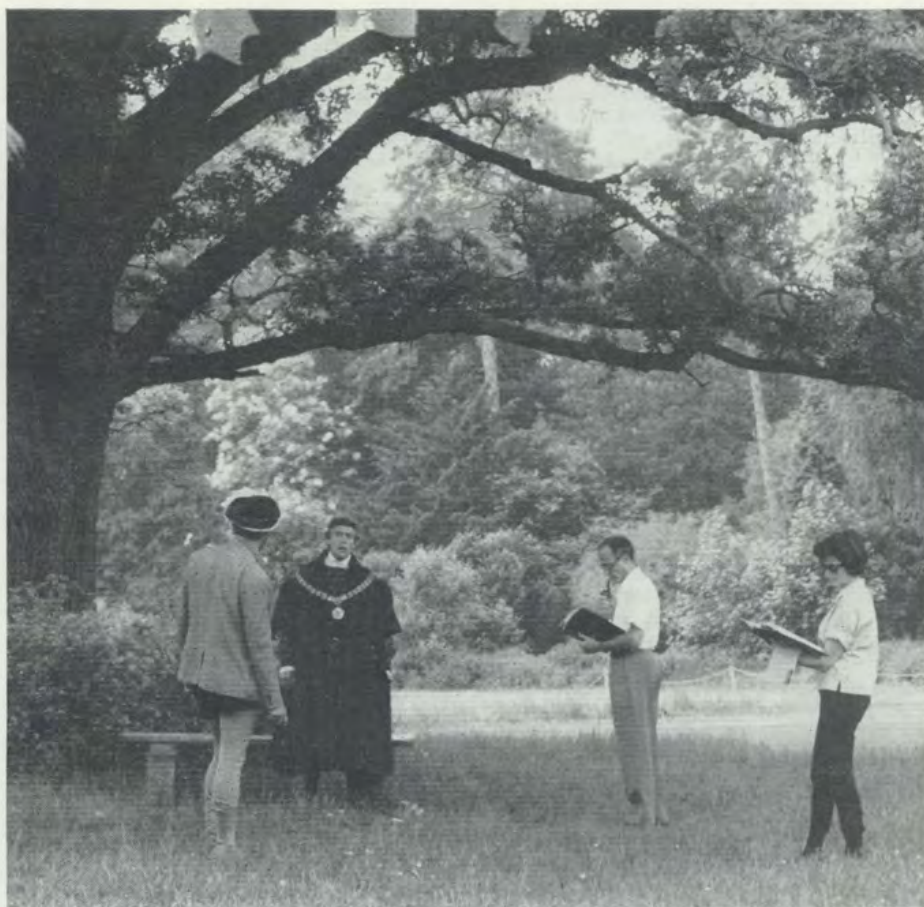
"BRYAN FORBES IS LETTING me have a week off from editing *The Whisperers* so that I can direct *Dutchman*." The statement came from Anthony Harvey a few days before he started the six-day shooting schedule of his first feature as director. Established as an editor with such credits as *Dr. Strangelove*, he was editing *The Whisperers* during the day and rehearsing his leading players for *Dutchman* during evenings and at weekends. "I like working under pressure," Harvey said. Not many people directing their first film would choose to work this way, but with a budget of only \$50,000 one doesn't have much choice.

The task was made somewhat easier by his good fortune in having as subject "this masterful piece of writing," needing no adaptation for the screen, and as leading players Shirley Knight and Al Freeman Jr., who have performed the play together many times in America. In *Dutchman* LeRoi Jones uses the story of a bohemian white girl seducing, taunting, humiliating and finally murdering a young middle-class negro in a carriage of a New York subway train to confront an audience with the normally suppressed attitudes that make up colour prejudice. The actors, both Method-trained, had built up their performances in fine detail over repeated stage shows, and Harvey avoided losing any of this by filming in long takes of five minutes or more and by shooting every scene on two cameras at the same time (three on the first day) from different angles.

The other big time-consumer in film-making is re-lighting each new set-up. This was pared to the bone by the promise of the lighting cameraman Gerry Turpin never to take more than ten minutes on a re-light. In practice he averaged about one minute. On the adverse side was the need to film the more outspoken scenes a second time, using slightly milder language to make sure of a version that will pass the censors.

The six days schedule for the hour-long feature was completed at Twickenham Studios early in August. The result was the amount of film coverage one expects from a schedule of three weeks or longer (an average British B-feature has a twelve day schedule); and the rushes displayed a rare intensity of emotion.

"After we finish shooting, I'll just put all that film in a cupboard and forget it until



REHEARSAL FOR "A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS", ADAPTED BY ROBERT BOLT FROM HIS OWN PLAY. ROBERT SHAW, PAUL SCOFIELD AND DIRECTOR FRED ZINNEMANN.

I've completed editing *The Whisperers*. And that is roughly what happened. Harvey expected to reach that stage in September, to spend a few days in New York collecting atmosphere shots of the New York subway, and to have a fully-edited married print by November. Even if it is a unique combination of circumstances that has made this film possible, it will still be quite an achievement for a debut.

ROGER HUDSON

Help Me, What Means . . .

DEAR JOHN PLEASE HELP ME WHAT MEANS QUOTE HE IS SOME UNDERPRESSER FROM DOWN BERMONDSEY END QUOTE. This was one of five queries cabled by a foreign friend struggling for subtitling purposes through the script of *Sparrows Can't Sing*. Well, be honest, do you know what an underpresser does for a living? And why should Bermondsey be down?

I regularly get such pleas for help, not because I have much to do with preparing final scripts of British films but because, as one who makes English subtitled versions of foreign films, I know what the problems are and I have come to know others facing the same problems in other countries; we help each other when we can.

Therefore, a salute to the British Standards Institution for its patriotic response to a request from the British Kinematograph Society to bring order into the preparation of final, post-production scripts of films (*Recommendations for the Preparation of Motion Picture Export Scripts*, price 7s. 6d.).

The new Standard is not going to grip the average reader, it has not got a very jolly style, but its effect will be felt in an improvement in the presentation of British films abroad. And, I selfishly hope, other countries will adopt many of its recommenda-

tions in the preparation of their own scripts.

As a matter of fact, the Standard's recommendations for setting out a Glossary are not its best feature, though it's nice to see the need for one acknowledged. The Spot Numbers proposed will serve as a rough guide for subtitlers, although titles would never fall exactly on all the measurements because of technical and artistic considerations. Films get chopped up for dubbing, anyway.

But quibbles aside, let us hope that British producers make good use of this Standard, and may foreign producers take note. But let it not cause a faceless uniformity, may other countries retain a little of their own charm. I will be sad if the Japanese scripts which sometimes come my way no longer note the colour of objects—in black and white films.

JOHN MINCHINTON

Charlton Heston

IN SYDNEY FOR READINGS from Robert Frost, Mark Twain and Thomas Wolfe for the State Department, Charlton Heston proved more than willing to talk about all his films, from early experiments in Shakespeare with David Bradley in the Michigan backwoods to *Khartoum*. He had, he said, got Universal to hire Orson Welles for the direction of *Touch of Evil*; Welles had originally only been intended to play the heavy. The film, he added, had been rather less severely tampered with than some interviews with Welles had suggested. I mentioned an unregenerate weakness for *Ruby Gentry*: reprehensible, perhaps, but . . . "Yes, I liked that one too. I enjoyed driving that convertible into the sea so much I've been wanting to do it again ever since. And that last scene—where Jennifer (Jones) and I

shoot it out in the swamp. Although she'd had practice enough for six in *Duel in the Sun*, she was terrified of guns. There we were, in that terrible studio fog, and I thought, she's not going to be able to pull the trigger... but she did..."

For *The Naked Jungle*, he had had to brave an army of Californian wood ants while smeared from head to foot in five gallons of molasses, for *The Ten Commandments* De Mille had made him climb Mount Sinai barefoot, and for *Ben Hur* he had had to plunge up to his neck in the icy winter Mediterranean. But these torments were as nothing to the mental suffering he endured over *The War Lord*, damaged, he said, by the studio in a way that still reduced him to helpless exasperation. "John Collier, Franklin Schaffner and myself planned it as a simple love story, contrasted with an examination of the witchcraft rituals of the middle ages. But Universal saw it differently—as a minor league *El Cid*."

They had built up the siege scene at the end so elaborately that it had, in Heston's view, spoiled the intimacy of the story. "And John Collier, who is an accomplished medievalist, had written some fine sequences of witchcraft, of a Bergman-like complexity. The studio boss in charge of the project was a Roman Catholic. When he saw the witchcraft material... well, most of it wound up on the cutting-room floor." And although Heston greatly admires Schaffner—who directed him in *Jane Eyre* and *Macbeth* on television—a final disappointment had been that critics had praised Schaffner alone for the beauty of the rituals, such as a Druid wedding, that were left in: all had been designed by Collier.

At mention of Sam Peckinpah's *Major Dundee*, Heston's face understandably went dark. It, too, had been planned as a small film, focusing on the bitter, frustrated life of horse soldiers during the Civil War, which was to be deglamorised completely for the first time. "We wanted to lay all those great, grey, gallant ghosts of the Confederacy." But Sam Peckinpah ("a feisty little tiger, all tension") had clashed with Jerry Bresler, the producer, from the

first day's shooting, and gradually the picture had expanded and expanded, against Peckinpah's wishes. In particular, Heston felt, the long sequence in the Mexican village had been too protracted for the film's good, and the original intention had slowly been frittered away.

What was Heston planning for the future? One was glad to hear that he had in mind another feature with Schaffner, *Pro*, a story about an ageing professional footballer crushed by the rising young giants on the team. This again was intended as a small, personal film, Heston added tentatively. But wasn't he, one felt like asking, too big now to be able to afford to walk small?

CHARLES HIGHAM

Alphaville for Admass

WE SENT COPIES of Philip French's "Alphaville for Admass" article in the Summer SIGHT AND SOUND to several British directors for possible comments. What do critical assumptions about a new, swinging conformism of style look like from the film-makers' side of the fence? Perhaps it's an encouraging sign of the times that most directors were too busy filming to comment. Richard Lester, however, we managed to catch between pictures. He writes:

"The 'Time magazine/ad-man's' view of London is something which is more amusing than important to me, but I do agree almost entirely with what Mr. French says about it. I do feel there is one benefit that has perhaps been overlooked, and that is that a certain confidence seems to have been built up not only in most of the young 'switched-on London' people but also in the film-makers who have been filming them. I suppose if you keep telling a group of film-makers that 'they are the most exciting, switched-on, creative group of people working in their profession,' eventually some will believe it. This should result in directors now attempting personal statements on all subjects more readily than a few years ago. Also, it seems that producers and distributors thinking themselves to be the 'most enlightened

producers and distributors in the world' are allowing young film-makers to spend enormous amounts of money on first films. This is certainly true in the case of two young men who have worked for me over the past few years and who are now in production with their own first films; films whose subjects are much more adventurous than the subjects that I was allowed to attempt without previous experience.

"I suppose it is true to say that none of us in England have made any films with the lasting value of the French films thrown up during the French cinema's period of confidence. But I think that if we are to produce films of great merit and value they would more likely be produced within an industry that is fairly confident.

"As for the problem that we are all middle-aged men in 'mods' clothing—the problem of communicating with contemporary cinema audiences is that the audience seems to remain 25 for ever while we all grow a year older each year, so that unless you start making films at a very young age you very soon out-distance the Dorian Grays in the stalls.

"As far as continuing to do subjects which reflect London and youth is concerned, I personally have just finished a film starring three middle-aged Americans taking place in first century Rome, and my next project is about the Second World War. My last three films obviously did deal with London's youth, but they were not consciously planned as being a youth trilogy, but rather exercises in communication between individuals—the Beatles being four people who communicate without speech, and the four people in *The Knack* who spoke without communicating. The fact that these films were made with young people and had backgrounds which might have prompted 'swinging London' intellectualising should not really be laid at my feet. I make films in London because people let me make them here and I like living here and that's all there is."

RICHARD LESTER

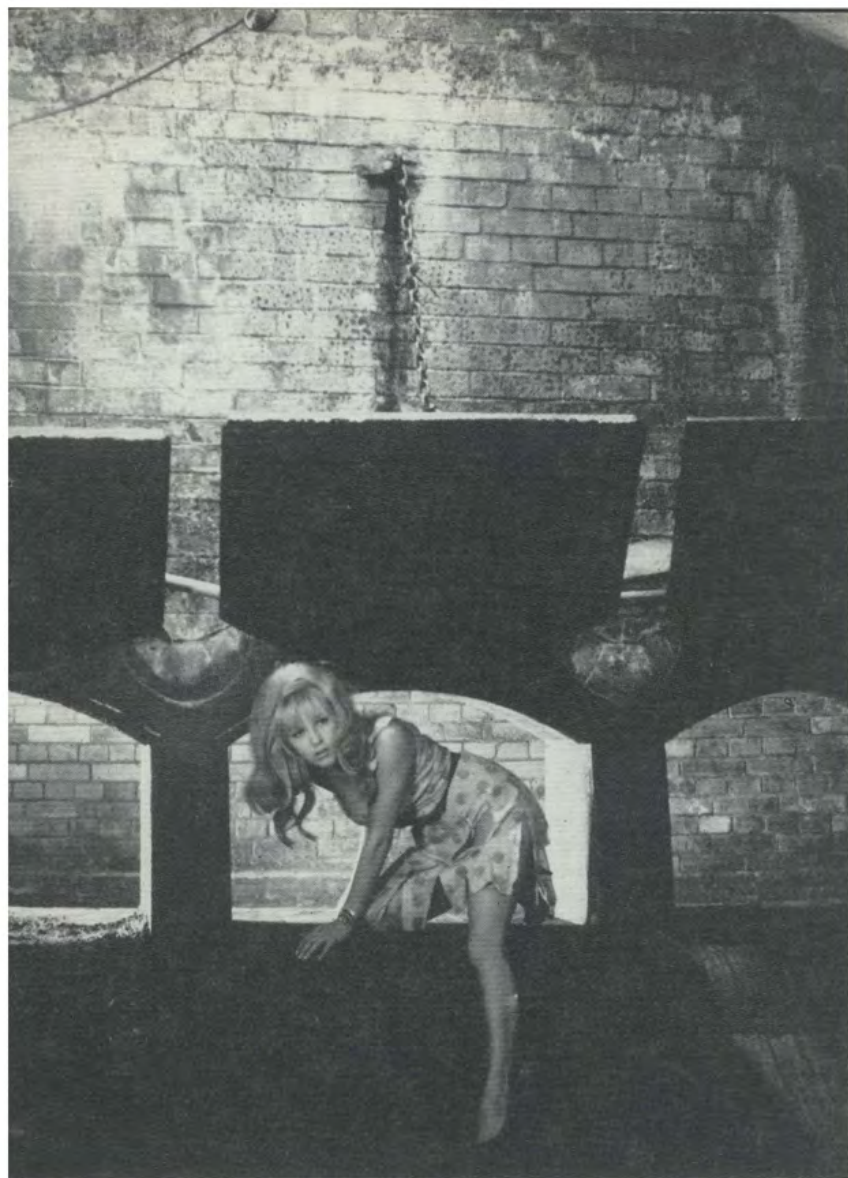
Back in Business

ANY ANNOUNCEMENT about a national film school is still being awaited. Meanwhile, one form of aid to film-makers is back in business. The Experimental Film Fund, operated by the British Film Institute since 1952, exhausted its original funds (£12,500 from the film trade; a further £10,000 grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation) some three years ago. Now it is again inviting applications from film-makers, though under a new name. Since it's felt that 'experimental' can be a word leading to an infinity of argument and misunderstanding, the committee which operates the Fund is now to be known simply as the Film Institute Production Board. Sir Michael Balcon remains as chairman; some people from outside the film world (art critics David Sylvester and John Berger; William Gaskill and Walter Lucas) have joined the film-makers on the Board.

The scheme had about 50 completed films behind it (by Kevin Brownlow, John Irvin, Karel Reisz, Robert Vas, Peter Watkins, etc.) when its activities were temporarily brought to a halt. Now it gets going again thanks to this year's increase in the BFI government grant. Equally positively, it is known to have Miss Jennie Lee's good wishes. Anyone with a project to put forward should apply to the Film Institute Production Board at 81 Dean Street, London, W.1.

ROBERT MORSE AND ROSALIND RUSSELL IN "OH DAD, POOR DAD...", RICHARD QUINE'S FILM FROM THE PLAY BY ARTHUR KOPIIT.





WHO WANTS TO KILL JESSIE?

KARLOVY VARY

MOST OF THE OFFICIAL ENTRIES at Karlovy Vary this year were very inert dumplings. The jury gave no grand prize. Main awards went to Petrovic's *Three* (Yugoslavia), Kovacs' *Cold Days* (Hungary), and Kachyna's *Carriage to Vienna* (Czechoslovakia), all war films. *Three* is refreshingly devoid of rhetoric; *Cold Days* a turgid atrocity chronicle. *Carriage* marks Kachyna's seventh film from a Jan Prochazka screenplay. It concerns the last days of World War Two (as did their *Long Live the Republic*), but the new collaboration is more intimist than epic, a minor but superbly photographed *exercice de style*.

Karlovy Vary's avowed aim of "brotherhood through films" was marred by an unpleasant little teapotty cold war. While Washington does not interfere with the film industry's choices for Western festivals, a State Department *aide-memoire* makes it clear that it behoves usis to select films for Moscow and Karlovy Vary. This year usis chose *The Russians are Coming*; when the Czechs refused to let it come, so as not to ruffle the Russians, the reply was no American film at all. Subsequently, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's *Noi Gio* (*Rising Storm*) was boycotted by most of the American contingent. A luncheon offered by the Motion Picture Association of America neatly coincided with the screening of Hanoi's entry. Incurious absent patriots thus missed out on the presentation of gifts by Vu Nang An of the Hanoi film studios; spectators got souvenir rings made from wreckage of the 1,000th American plane shot down over Vietnam. The film itself, a ramshackle melodrama, did contain a final sequence reminiscent of a lurid Monogram quickie—the Vietcong heroine being "questioned" by the American officer has her fingers bandaged with lint, dipped in petrol and set ablaze.

Happily, the off-campus festival was extremely rewarding. In small screening rooms tucked away in corners of the bath-houses of the beautiful valleyed Bohemian spa town, or up in the odd wings of sanatoria perched on the hills surrounding it, one was given a rich selection of recent Czech films, out of competition—none of them less than good, all marked by adroitness of style and freedom of content. The cinemas of other Socialist countries still seem stuck in the mire of post-personality-cult guilt complexes and problems. Only the Czechs have got round to treating current everyday life relaxedly and with disarming humour.

Pavel Juracek's feature *Kazdy Mlady Muz* (*Every Young Man*) is a remarkably free-keyed two-part poem on army life, written and shot by Joseph Kilian's director while he was doing his own military service. We first get the random odyssey of a tough corporal and his charge, a young recruit with a sore foot, whom he has been assigned to bring to a city hospital for examination. Corporal refuses to speak to rookie. But during their day in town, the civilian world turns its back on both of them. In a passage strongly reminiscent of *Kilian*, the city becomes a hostile labyrinth, filled with incomprehensible beings. Extreme isolation finally draws the two men together. Part two is a wonderfully relaxed mosaic of scenes from barracks life—here Juracek miraculously avoids every trap inherent in service films. Much improvisation; the result a set of moving and wistfully Chekhovian notations about the passage from boyhood to manhood. Nothing could be less martial than this bunch of Czech soldiers: most are obviously timid, insecure virgins in uniform.

Vorlicek's delightful science fiction comedy *Who Wants to Kill Jessie?* is a Pirandellian romp, involving a professor and wife whose lives are disrupted by the invasion of a madcap group of comic strip characters. Its pop-art main titles were a particular joy.

* * *

After these tidings of Czech comfort and cheer it is a major pest to have to report that Prague is having its own *Religieuse* affair these days. The banned bone of contention is a beauty—Jan Nemec's *O Slavnosti a Hostech* (*A Report on the Party and the Guests*), based on a short story by his wife, Ester Krumbachova. The film begins like a fashionable latter-day *Partie de Campagne*. A group of nattily dressed, high-spirited

Festivals 66

Karlovy Vary / San Sebastian Berlin & Venice



"EVERY YOUNG MAN".

ladies and gentlemen collect in a forest where they have all been convoked to an outdoor birthday party. They trot gaily through the woods and are suddenly met by a group of ruffians who turn out to be assistants to their host. The leader, Rudolph, a psychopathic Goebbelsian type, orders the guests about roughly. The guests take the line of least resistance and accept humiliations—anything goes, as long as they do not lose the right to attend the party. All are finally assembled in a staggeringly composed *scena*: endless rows of laden tables, candlelit in broad daylight by a calm lakeside, where strange-shaped *hors d'oeuvres*, like tiny mouse coffins, await their appetites. (The composition of this scene was devised by Nemec after photographs of an actual banquet given for Nobel Prize winners.)

The host appears, a jovial authoritarian. A lady notices that she is seated at the wrong place, and all the guests are obliged to reshuffle seats: a theatre of the absurdish game of musical chairs ensues. One man gets up and leaves the party—no slight irony in the casting of non-actors is that the part is taken by director Evald Schorm, whose own estimable film *Every Day Courage* was banned for a year by political censorship. This single act of free choice throws everything into a dither; to restore order, several of the guests take part in the quickly formed hunting party which sets out with police dogs to track down the outsider and bring him back to the feast. The film ends with a shot of candles being snuffed out one by one on the banqueting tables, as dog snarls on the soundtrack grow louder and more furious.

"NUEVE CARTAS A BERTA".



At times, this sharp fable recalls Buñuel's *Exterminating Angel*, but in shape and significance Nemec's film is more deeply original, as difficult as *Diamonds of the Night*, but classically constructed. It has apparently been banned because Party officials take themselves to be satirised in it, or the film as a whole has been seen by the Czech government as an attack on the socialist state. This is cutting things more than a bit thin. The film's central statement—generalised indifference and the survival instinct in most people leading to blind collaboration with authority, then this uneasy balance of strength and weaknesses being challenged by a single outsider who prefers freedom to survival—is a universal theme, distressingly, endemically apposite to modern literature, wherever modern literature exists.

While the film unreels, the single-threaded story seems deceptively unplotted, a chance anecdote, or "happening", but a "happening" cleverly dictated in advance. Days after seeing it, *Party* sticks cleanly in the mind, refuses to get unstuck. The final irony is that in spite of Prague officialdom's decision to ban it, of all recent Czech films it is probably the one with the widest potential appeal for intelligent audiences abroad. It would not do well at home, where the average tired Prague working man prefers German Westerns like *Winnetou*, the *Red Gentleman* to *Long Live the Republic*.

Concurrently, as Czech films in the last few years have gained spectators abroad by their quality, they have lost a third of their audience at home. The turn of the screw is that cinemas in Czechoslovakia can only receive the foreign cash with which to purchase those *Red Gentlemen* and their ilk by exporting films like *Party and the Guests*. After it, Nemec made another film, a burlesque comedy called *Mucednici Lasky* (*The Martyrs of Love*), completed in August. This is destined for fewer tribulations and wider home appeal than *Party*. But meanwhile, as an absolute minimum of hope deferred, the attentive eye on the horizon assumes that, as was the case with Schorm's *Every Day Courage*, after the gates have been lifted high enough for *Party* to win a few prizes at festivals, it may eventually be released—the awards acting as a sort of moral bail bond for the film. Nemec is not, as has been suggested, a man to reshoot it. He would sooner shoot himself. As with Rivette's *Religieuse*, the ban on this imposing work proves its absolute loyalty to the truth of the human situation—a dangerous task for any film, in any country.

ELLIOTT STEIN

SAN SEBASTIAN

THIRTY YEARS AGO, while elsewhere in Europe Czechoslovakia was being carved up by another dictator, the Basque people of Spain were providing some of the fiercest resistance to the Falangist uprising. It could only have been a reflection of that peculiar Spanish irony that in the middle of Spain's showpiece Film Festival, at San Sebastián in the heart of the Basque country, members of the Czech delegation were mistaken by the police for participants in a Basque nationalist demonstration, while one of the few highlights of the festival was a Czech film entitled *Long Live the Republic*.

The San Sebastián Festival echoed the split personality of Franco's Spain, a superficial glamour masking an extreme poverty. Still, with three films a day and a retrospective ranging from early Méliès to Japanese science fiction, there were bound to be flashes of light to dispel the general gloom, and the Czechs were there to provide them. Ivan Passer's *Intimate Lighting* is a simple story of a musician, Petr, invited by Bambas, an old college friend, to give a concert in a small country town. Petr settles in for a few days of family life, rehearses a string quartet, talks with Bambas about the old days. But things have changed for Bambas, and Petr gradually realises that his friend is no longer the lively spirit of their student days, that he has neglected the musical talent he once had and now lives only for his family, his house and his car. As with Forman's films, much of the dialogue is improvised, and most of the actors are non-professionals. The film's opening scenes lack the sharpness of a Forman film; but

once it gets under way, it has the same insight into nuances of character, the same bitter-sweet observation of detail. Inevitably, in what is little more than a series of incidents, one remembers particular scenes: a quarrelsome family meal where no one can make up his mind what he wants to eat and the food is duly passed round from plate to plate until the visitors break out into embarrassed giggles; and a moment of truth for Bambas and Petr in the early hours of the morning, when the two friends drink themselves into their younger days. Relaxed, amiable, informal; but behind the seemingly inconsequential style, there is much thought, and much that rings uncomfortably true.

It is some indication of how far the Czech films outstripped the rest that the International Critics Jury needed three ballots to decide between the Passer film and Karel Kachyna's *Long Live the Republic*. The prize finally went to Kachyna's film, a longer and much more ambitious exercise which centres on the adventures of a boy in a village in Moravia towards the end of the last war. Almost suffocatingly lyrical (almost, but not quite), and at times surrealist, with the time sequences confused as the boy's daydreams mingle with his actual experiences, the film is punctuated by a series of haunting images as we watch through his eyes the passing of the German and Russian fronts through the village. In the end, perhaps, a little too contrived; but still memorable for what one picks up along the way, notably a sharp mockery of the church and of peasant pigheadedness of which Buñuel would not be ashamed.

Either of these films could have won the Gran Concha de Oro, which finally went to the British entry, Desmond Davis' *I Was Happy Here*. Of the rest, some were mediocre, others hardly that, and almost everything of note was shown out of competition (interesting here to see Samuel Fuller's *Shock Corridor*, and hard to see why as yet it has not been shown in this country). Of the two films from France, there was little to choose between Jean Herman's *Le Dimanche de la Vie* and Pierre Etaix's *Tant qu'on a la Santé*, and both palled beside *Un Homme et une Femme*, which, along with a flying visit from Anouk Aimée, made the Festival for more than one Spanish critic I talked to. The Etaix film is again no more than a series of sketches, some of them only mildly funny, thrown together under the general theme of one man's isolation in the face of a hostile world. Jean Herman's film is adapted from a story by Raymond Queneau, who wrote *Zazie dans le Métro*. It echoes the style of Malle's Queneau film, with a battery of camera tricks, sight gags, and an all-prevailing anarchy. But its characters are very far from being another Zazie.

Towards the end of the festival, with the press desk reporting more enquiries about the nearest bullfight than about the films, spirits were roused by the appearance of the home product, *Nueve Cartas a Berta*, a first film by Basilio Martín Patino. An impressionistic record of one student's picture of the clash of generations, it combines an insight into the pathos of contemporary Spain, the gropings towards a freedom of expression painfully struggling to free itself of the chains of conformism, with an adventurous visual style. In brief and often striking images, we watch the student discovering for himself the complex duality of modern Spain, the stranglehold of the church, the uneasy guilt of a generation scarred by the Civil War, the clinging to the past expressed as much in the architecture of the city as in the moral inflexibility of its people. With its frozen frames, slow motion, and deliberately dissonant music, the film sometimes bears the marks of a young director coming to grips with his medium. But it has the courage of its convictions, and it indicates at least that if all the young Turks of Spain are as promising as this, we may soon be welcoming a rebirth of the cinema in Spain.

DAVID WILSON

BERLIN

MAYBE IT WAS JUST the luck of the draw; maybe Cannes got all the plums and the newer films were being reserved for Venice: whatever the reason, Berlin '66 was a sad disappointment compared with last year's event. At its lowest



UTTAM KUMAR IN "NAYAK".

level, there were several quite unaccountable entries in both the competition and the Information Section: a Philippine murder mystery whose Steiner-like score and heaving close-ups palely imitated some old Warner Brothers epic; a Brazilian piece about a society girl who develops a yen for a large black stallion. One rung up came the would-be art films with sexy overtones and applause-making finales; like the Greek *Fear*, directed by Costas Manoussakis, which was basically the old one about hot passions on the farm, including the most prolonged rape scene ever and a mute servant girl who foolishly reverted to that old film habit of washing herself in full view of a potential seducer. Still, it had a relentless kind of rhythm, some expressive river locations, and it made a change from Cacoyannis.

More films, by mainly young directors, could be generically labelled 'mood sketches': Edouard Luntz's *Les Coeurs Verts*, the Norwegian *Writing in the Snow*, the Dutch new wave imitation *A Morning of Six Weeks*. In retrospect, these and several others merge into a hazy vision of people quarrelling and hitting each other, or taking long walks along misty riverbanks, accompanied by jazz scores and cut-ins of stills, posters, objects. The Luntz picture in particular, with its authentic seeming delinquents and moments of tenderness in the (inevitable) dance-hall, would have made a decent short but broke down at feature length. All in all, the festival confirmed that Godard remains the most disruptive of influences—with Antonioni a close second. And although Godard invariably shows up the inadequacies of his imitators, his own *Masculin Féminin* gets close to the danger-line of boredom. Perhaps I have an aversion to this kind of *cinéma vérité*: long takes of Jean-Pierre Léaud eating and chatting while his girl friends do their hair. Non-stop talk, directed with an absorbed fascination which expected—and in my case failed to get—the same absorption from the audience.

Though I seem to have gone through the festival looking for a good old-fashioned story, Chabrol's *Ligne de Démarcation* had the paradoxical effect of seeming almost too respectable, with its carefully judged atmosphere of wartime resistance and solidly restrained playing by Gélin and Seberg. It seemed a curious choice of subject after his spy parodies, but perhaps Chabrol wanted to get back, at least temporarily, to his more traditional narrative style. Though the film becomes rather silly towards the end, there is much to admire in the detailed clarity of its telling; and Chabrol's old maliciousness keeps coming through in his portrait of two mackintoshed Gestapo men, all purry and steel-eyed.

After days of tedium or half-successes, the British and American entries at least set standards of professionalism. Britain won her second Grand Prix of the year for *Cul de Sac*. America should also have received some jury recognition for *The Group*, though the Berlin audience gave it a stormy reception. Perhaps there was too much dialogue for them;

more probably, I suspect, they couldn't 'see' the direction. The other official entry, **Lord Love a Duck**, was the first film directed by writer George Axelrod: lively enough, apart from one or two muffed action sequences, to make one look forward to his next. A sex fantasy (or is it?) of American college life, it provided a field day for Tuesday Weld fans. Tender, charming and funny, she wriggles and lisps from one obscene situation to the next; and one regretted the more that Kubrick hadn't used her for *Lolita*. Roddy McDowall has one splendid scene with the school psychiatrist, who is testing him with ink blot charts to no effect until she screams: "Please don't fight me. Can't you realise they are *meant* to be dirty?"

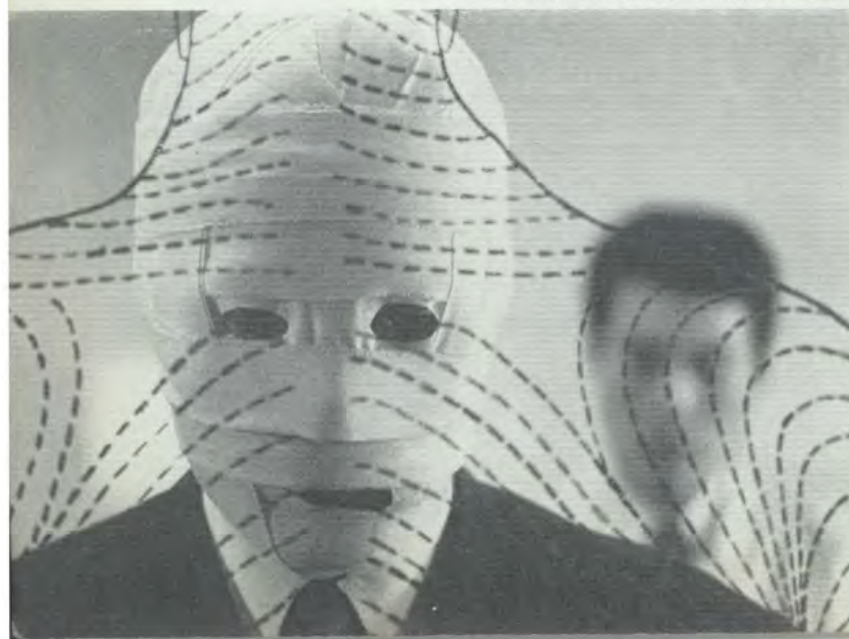
Spain's **La Caza**, directed by Carlos Saura, has already been discussed in SIGHT AND SOUND (Spring 1966). I will only add that its political echoes are probably only fully accessible to Spaniards (certainly they did not emerge in the dialogue as translated at Berlin); and that I found the ending, when almost the entire cast kill each other off, rather too transparently complementary to the massacre of rabbits which precedes it.

There was nothing difficult to comprehend in Satyajit Ray's **Nayak**: that, paradoxically enough, is possibly its weakness. This is one of Ray's modern stories, set on a luxury train and concerned with the life and thoughts of an Indian film star (played rather lumpishly by a real star, Uttam Kumar) as he goes to collect a prize in Delhi. But his dreams and flashbacks are both predictable and rather ordinary: he is ambitious and loves and fears money, he had a hard climb to fame, he has mysterious sex problems which are never gone into. The cross-section of passengers whom he meets are neatly deployed but insubstantial, and for all the rich detail of the train set, there is little feeling of being on a journey. Perhaps Ray needs a central situation (like the garden scene in *Charulata*) which allows the film to expand. Or maybe he is less at ease with a male central character. Whenever Sharmila Tagore (a perky, bespectacled woman journalist who befriends the star) is on the screen, the whole thing flashes into life and humour.

* * *

As usual in Berlin, the retrospective sessions were particularly absorbing. And in the case of the Brazilian series, distinctly saddening, following on the thousands of words devoted to Cinema Novo in European magazines. The truth is that the post-war Brazilian cinema is just not very good: that its young directors have taken over elements of Forties neo-realism, mixed a little Soviet socialist realism with bizarre native folklore, and fallen into traps of over-simplification (wicked landlords wolfishly eating or smugly oppressing) and De Sica-like sentimentality (rapt close-ups of tormented or angelic faces staring fixedly at the camera). True, there are brilliant individual sequences in films by dos Santos, Rocha and others, but they invariably lead towards schematic conclusions. (The Brazilian entry in competition, **The Priest and the Young Girl**, took a theme from Buñuel's *Nazarin* and hammered away at it for nearly two hours, whereas Buñuel

TESHIGAHARA'S "FACE OF ANOTHER".



said it all in one scene.) Technically, the films suffer from undistinguished lighting and rhythmless editing; and, on the Berlin evidence, Brazilian acting looks to be some of the most inflexible in the world.

It was a relief to turn to the Ophuls retrospective of ten films made between 1932 and 1955. Hopes that the German version of *Lola Montès* might turn out to be the original one were dashed, though there seemed to be one or two circus bits not encountered elsewhere. The real discovery, though, was his version of Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* (1932). More like a film with songs than an opera, this proved a constant delight because Ophuls was a truly musical creator: music and movement effortlessly interwoven; country locations, including an open-air circus, done with a natural feeling for period and the myth of the strolling player (and much more potent than Fellini's, in my view). Even at this early date, Ophuls' characteristic swinging camera is much in evidence, as well as a master's ability to make everything work for him—lighting, décor, players, singers—to produce a total charm.

JOHN GILLET

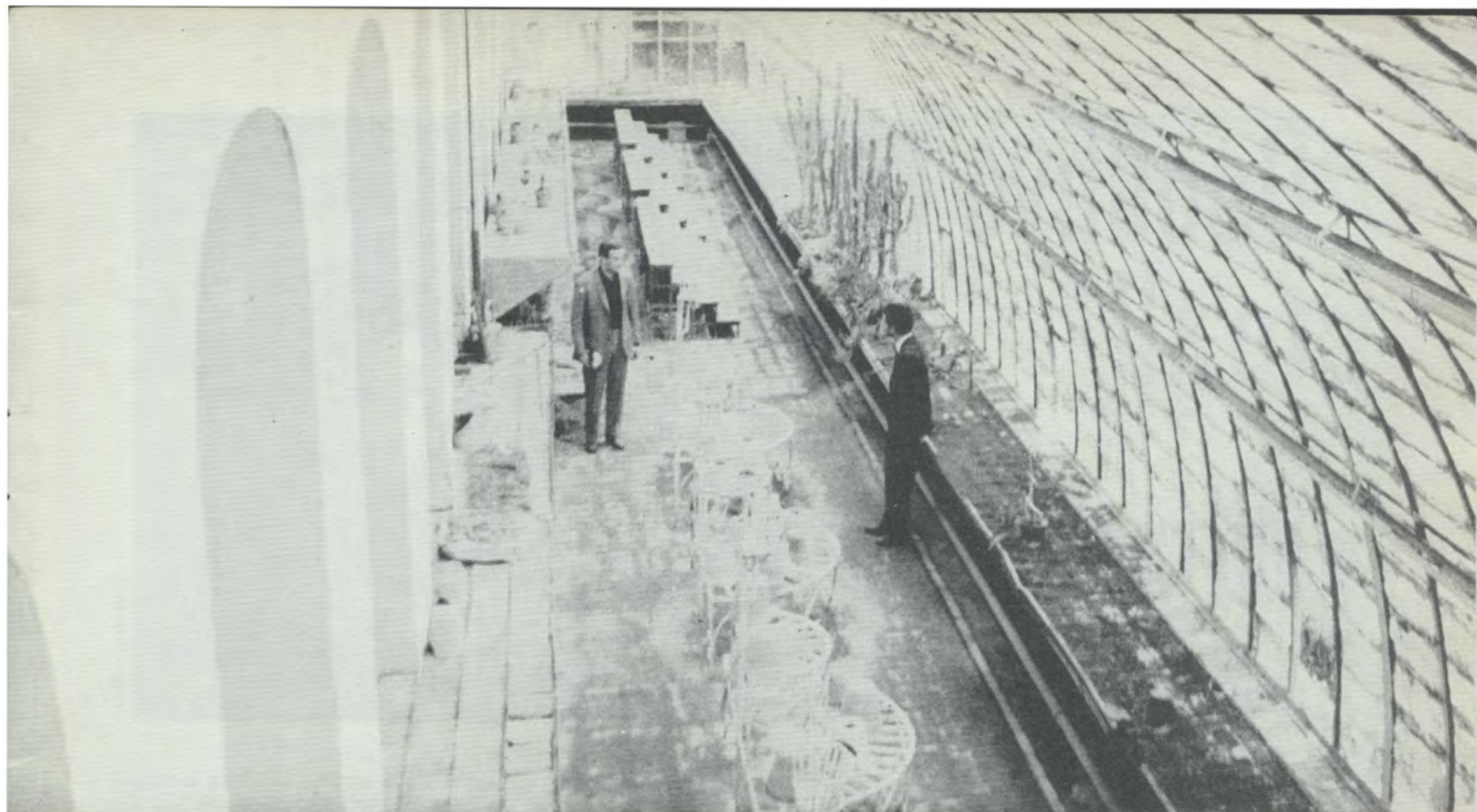
VENICE

UNCOMPROMISING AS EVER, Venice opened this year with a curious double bill well calculated to drive any self-respecting first night audience to distraction: not only Roger Corman's **The Wild Angels**, a study of the beat ethics of the Californian motor-cycle gangs which was crossly described as "just an exploitation movie," but also **Comédie**, a mostly inaudible and partly invisible adaptation of the Beckett play. Arriving in Venice the following day, I never caught up with *Comédie*, but saw the Corman at a bizarre screening where the cinema was besieged for half-an-hour by beady-eyed police, uttering Cassandra-like cries of warning and evidently expecting an outbreak of lust and violence.

Despite weaknesses in the acting and some muddy Pathécolor patches, *The Wild Angels* turned out to be a brilliant piece of film-making, visually rather reminiscent of Anger's *Scorpio Rising* in its use of cool, pale colours as a setting for the whole glittering paraphernalia of machines, medallions, chains and swastikas. All the sequences out on the road are superbly shot without a single back-projection, and for once communicate the full exhilaration of speed and space, while the script is tough enough not to soften things by suggesting that these are just crazy mixed-up kids. Corman's heroes are grown men, pushing early middle-age, who live this way because they like it and can envisage nothing else but the kicks of the moment. The extraordinary sequence of the funeral procession, for instance, in which the gang pour out along the road in homage to one of their number shot by the police, suddenly develops from an expression of solidarity into a ruthless orgy in which everything else disappears from sight: the quiet village church is systematically wrecked, the altar draped with swastikas, the preacher stuffed into the coffin, and the dead man hauled out to preside over the party with a cigarette between his lips while his widow is raped by two gang-members who consider her to be back on the open market. Just as suddenly as it began, the horrific masque comes to an end, the corpse is gently returned to his coffin, and everybody embarks in solemn procession for the cemetery. Corman's vision of life as a gigantic horror film may not be to everyone's taste, but here, surely, is a director at work?

The next few days produced an unusually handsome crop of monsters and worthy bores (Mexican, Brazilian, Czech, Spanish), headed by the two independent American films, Alex Matter's **The Drifter** and Conrad Rooks' **Chappaqua**: both are of the running, jumping, standing still species, the former containing the obligatory scene in which the hero runs along a deserted beach in search of something or other, the latter containing the almost equally obligatory hallucinations of a junkie. *Chappaqua*, with its extraordinarily beautiful colour photography, its lushly undraped ladies, oriental mysticism and meaningless visions, also revealed a touch of the Fellinis which seem to have affected the two ladies of the festival.

Mai Zetterling's **Night Games**, announced as touching upon



DE SETA'S "UN UOMO A METÀ".

"incest, homosexuality, necrophilia, onanism and all varieties of sado-masochism," and shown only to the press at a screening from which the public were excluded for reasons of censorship, naturally aroused a good deal of curiosity. Prurience satisfied, one has to admit that it is bold, sincere and all that, but really very dull: a baroque film in everything except the direction, which, as in *Loving Couples*, tends to plod solemnly along. Here again is that Swedish chateau in which a motley collection of characters, vaguely aristocratic and vaguely period, moon around and intermittently get up to a variety of bizarre tricks. As in *La Dolce Vita*, their goings-on are evidently intended to be taken as a stern indictment of decadence: but they obstinately remain mere goings-on.

Much the same can be said of Agnès Varda's pretentiously dreary *Les Créatures*, the story of a writer who sees the people around him as part of the novel he is writing. In his imagination, or maybe in real life—it is never very clear—they begin to behave very oddly, and eventually become, quite literally, chessmen in a battle of good and evil fought between the writer and a mad scientist. The compositions are often exquisite, reminding one that Varda was originally a stills photographer. But it never takes fire as a Pirandellian subject, and with rose tinted sequences to symbolise good, red for evil, the film is as prettily empty as *Giulietta degli Spiriti*.

Nevertheless, despite all the gloom, and its solitary indisputable masterpiece in Bresson's weird and wonderful *Au Hasard, Balthazar*, the festival gradually began to haul itself up out of the mire. Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* has its faults, but it ought to receive a special prize for sheer enjoyableness. One need have had no fears about his clash with England and the English: from the opening shot of a scarlet fire-engine tearing down the road, a bright, gleaming childhood red, to the last shots of the bookmen wandering through the snow at the edge of the icy lake, this is a Truffaut film every inch of the way. Much of it is done with characteristically quirkish humour: the absurd TV programmes of the future with their idiot snatches of women's magazine dialogue, the wife who throws away her husband's electric razor and proudly presents him with a cut-throat ("It's the latest thing—everyone's using them now"), the fire chief who rewards his subordinates by promising to present them with one of his "personal medallions". At the same time, the camera watches patiently as

Montag wonderingly discovers the pleasure of reading, slowly working his way down a titlepage to the last word of the imprint; and it sadly records the almost human way in which the pages of a book curl up and die, one by one, as they burn. Behind the film's casual surface (a dislocation of reality rather than a science fiction aura) and brashly attractive colour, there lies a genuine horror at the destruction of the books; and the elegiac last sequence, with its stunning time jump as the bookmen are suddenly transported into the snowy future, is probably the best work Truffaut has ever done.

The Italian entries were both good, both unexpected, with Gillo Pontecorvo's *La Battaglia di Algeri* rather the better of the two. Using no newsreel footage whatsoever, this is an astonishingly convincing documentary reconstruction of the long years of underground activity, acts of terrorism and brutal reprisals which ultimately led to independence for Algeria. The remarkable thing about the film is that, unlike most documentaries which seek out deserted streets and people them with handfuls of unconvincing extras, here the entire population of Algiers seems to be taking part in the film. This really is a city celebrating its history, so that even the most casual shot is filled with passers-by who act their roles to perfection. Equally remarkable (considering that it is an Italo/Algerian co-production) is the film's restraint. No attempt is made to whitewash the Algerian terrorist outrages at the expense of those committed by "Les Paras": both are equally deplored. But one can see why the French delegates called for a boycott of the film at the festival. Its message rings loud and clear for any emergent nation.

Vittorio De Seta's *Un Uomo a Metà*, a far cry from the neo-neo-realism of his *Banditi a Orgosolo*, is a slow, Antonioni-ish study of a young journalist who gradually grows more and more detached from reality, until he finally realises he is going mad and plunges into his past to discover (in a rather trite ending) why. The film appears to have been generally disliked, but one man's meat . . . Almost against my will, I found myself hypnotised into admiration by the exquisite photography, the perfectly judged changes of rhythm in the editing, and above all, De Seta's repeated visual trick of keeping only details in focus while the rest of the screen is seen as a blur, which conveyed very acutely to me the sense of a mind losing

(Continued on page 206)

Goodbye to all What?

Philip French



"LES CARABINIERS."

I WAS TALKING the other day with a former critic, who after nearly a decade of writing on films had changed jobs and scarcely been to the movies since. He was, he said, utterly worn out, and found it an almost insuperable effort even to drag himself along to those occasional films which fall into the sorry category of 'conversational necessities.' Naturally I was a little depressed to hear this, but not in the least surprised. For I know several people, untroubled by either failing eyesight or advancing years, who served longish periods as movie reviewers and now go to the cinema about as often as they say their prayers.

What is more, there is no shyness about their abdication, no sense of guilt about not keeping up with the art that once consumed so much of their attention, no feeling that they might be missing something. On the contrary, the attitude is one of almost blessed relief from what in some cases seemed a well-nigh intolerable burden. And giving up film criticism is often the occasion for a valedictory article that combines a confession of being washed out with a ritual washing of hands. As this phenomenon seems as common among critics of the cinema as it is rare (or almost non-existent) among those of other arts, it might be useful to examine some of these valedictory pieces to see the reasons given.

The most recent of such articles is of course "Tynan's Farewell," as it was advertised on the front page of the *Observer's* Weekend Review for May 29th; and I was particularly struck by the fact that it appeared on the anniversary of similar, though much longer, articles by two other well-known critics. In 1946 Wolcott Gibbs wrote "The Country of the Blind" in the

Saturday Review of Literature after ten months of film reviewing for an unnamed "magazine of modest but genteel circulation." In 1956 Harry Schein brought his eight years of criticism for the Swedish monthly journal *BLM* (*Bonniers Litterära Magasin*) to an end with a final article called with devastating simplicity "Trött på film" (*Tired of Films*).

Kenneth Tynan's "valediction as a critic of the cinema" was actually fairly brief, and perhaps the most significant thing about it is precisely that he should have chosen those words to describe it. Maybe (some would say "no doubt") he will return; but it had been clear that the cinema was providing him with rapidly diminishing stimulation. He made three points, however, as he hurried through the foyer. The first was that, unlike a play "which is still a living organism capable of change and alteration," a film was fixed long before a critic saw it and so "cannot be modified by what he says." From this he devised tests for a good play ("its ability to respond to different interpretations") and a good film ("cannot be other than what it is") which start a number of hares that we needn't pursue here.

Tynan's second point concerned the critic's limited influence upon the audience for a current film—that he "can sometimes unearth an audience for a minority movie but he cannot compete with the vast advertising techniques that ensure a mass audience for a majority movie." This led him on to his third point, which was that even if a critic wished to influence the character of future big budget films (he placed the lower limit at £250,000), what chance would he have? About as much chance, he suggested, as asking General Motors to build helicopters instead of cars.

After these snappy, clinching points (in baseball parlance: three balls, no strikes) there followed a little italicised note at the foot of the column to the effect that I would be the *Observer's* guest critic for a couple of weeks. "My God," many readers must have felt justified in saying, "how can he be bothered to do it?" Yet Tynan's lament is really as nothing compared with the varied reflections and animadversions of Gibbs and Schein.

Wolcott Gibbs is best known in this country as the author of some of the outstanding *New Yorker* profiles of the Thirties, most notably those of Alexander Woollcott and Henry Luce; he had joined that magazine shortly after it started and helped shape its urbane, slightly condescending character. For many years he was the *New Yorker's* theatre columnist, and on his death in 1958 was succeeded as guest critic for a couple of seasons by Kenneth Tynan. It was as a contribution to the war effort that he wrote on films from December 1944 until the following September, and his witty notes on that experience are to be found in his book *Season in the Sun*.

Not a man given to equivocation, Gibbs made a few self-deprecating remarks about the influence of his writing and came rapidly to the point:

The purpose of this essay is to explain, as clearly as I can and while certain memories are still green, why it seems to me that the cinema resists rational criticism almost as firmly as a six-day bicycle race, or perhaps love. . . . It is my indignant opinion that ninety per cent of the moving pictures exhibited in America are so vulgar, witless, and dull that it is preposterous to write about them in any publication not intended to be read while chewing gum.

By implication one supposes that it was all right to review plays in a magazine intended to be read while drinking Beefeater Gin, and I doubt if Gibbs found the Broadway seasons that straddled his period as a film critic much more rewarding. But for the record: in 1944-45 he might have seen, among other not unnoteworthy films, *The Southerner*, *They Were Expendable*, *Hail the Conquering Hero*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *Spellbound*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, and *Double Indemnity*. The highlights of the Broadway season of 1944-45 were *The Glass Menagerie* (which very nearly folded in Chicago), Arthur Miller's *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (which closed after four performances), Helen Hayes in *Harriet* (a biographical play about the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Harvey*.

During the 1945-46 season Mr. Gibbs and the critical fraternity came in for one of those counter-attacks from playwrights which are such a recurrent feature of the theatrical scene but so rarely occur in the cinema. Maxwell Anderson took large advertisements to defend his poetic drama *Truckline Café* and Orson Welles weighed in with a vigorous defence of *Around the World*, a musical upon which he collaborated with Cole Porter. There was, I believe, no reaction from the industry to his film piece, but then he mentioned no film or film-maker by name. Anyway, back to the article.

Gibbs made a couple of exceptions to the remarks I've quoted—the occasional good picture with a slight element of reality (one or two a year at most, and they invariably lose money), documentaries, and “frank melodramas which have nothing to do with life and therefore are exempt from criticism.” Most pictures were bad because they were necessarily aimed at people of low intelligence, had to appeal to such a heterogeneous international audience, and were at the mercy of every kind of pressure group.

Having outlined this situation, Gibbs went on to describe the “small but fascinating literary comedy” involved in a conscientious reviewer's attempts to write about films costing more than a million dollars (the same sum by pre-devaluation rates that Tynan cited). “He writes, you might say, rather the way Henry Wadsworth Longfellow used to look,” claimed Gibbs, is driven to debase the language by frequent recourse to “a very special vocabulary” (‘luminous’, ‘taut’, ‘haunting’, ‘lyric’, ‘brave’, ‘tender’, ‘compassionate’, ‘poignant’, etc.), develops a remarkable talent for inflating “non-existent plots,” and for suggesting the presence of, but not elucidating, symbolism. This highfalutin’ vagueness extended to the critic's remarks on direction and photography; in the case of the former because “the mass mating of minds in any Hollywood picture makes it impossible for the layman to tell who did what,” in the latter because

it is “an insanely complicated, endlessly refined, and wickedly deceptive technical process about which it is reasonable to assume he knows about as much as he does about the inner workings of a seismograph.” By ‘correct’ or ‘striking’ compositions, the critic invariably means “those that most closely resemble the paintings on sale in department stores.” And “he is a perennial sucker for the studiously telling details . . . that are all part of a sort of primitive shorthand used by films to trap the unwary.”

Modestly Gibbs conceded in conclusion that all this must have occurred to anyone who has thought at all about the cinema. But it took him “ten months of physical discomfort and mental confusion” before he appreciated “the whole absurdity” of what he was trying to do—“to write, that is, for the information of my friends about something that was plainly designed for the entertainment of their cooks—and before I realised that I had no intention of doing it again.”

Now just at that moment when Gibbs was seeing the light and making his separate peace, some four thousand miles away in Stockholm a youthful, enthusiastic Harry Schein was preparing to embark upon a critical career. He was already an astute businessman, and in the process of building up a considerable fortune in the field of chemical engineering. Schein's position was an enviable one. *BLM* is Sweden's best intellectual journal, in appearance something like *Encounter*, but more literary and less political, and one meets few Swedes interested in the arts who don't read it.

Obviously the rewards of writing for such a periodical are immense, but it imposes a strain on a critic. For though he doesn't have to review (or indeed even see) every film that comes along, he is likely to feel eventually that he has had his say on the general themes that he has the time and space to tackle. Further, he is writing for a broadly-based readership far from being committed to the cinema. And after eight years Schein was “tired of films, fairly tired of looking at films and very tired of writing about films. I have long since said all I am able to say about films.”

These prefatory remarks set the tone of Schein's piece; and unlike Tynan (by implication) and Gibbs (explicitly) he does not go on to suggest that the practice of film criticism is impossible or worthless. In fact he pays tribute to several Swedish critics who, miraculously, “still write with an impressive enthusiasm, a youthful vitality, which cannot simply be due to the ability of superior writers to make a better job of hiding their fatigue.” Incidentally, when I first met Schein seven years after this article appeared (I hadn't read it at that time), I found him totally unwilling to discuss any aspect of film criticism other than its possible fatuity, though he'd

talk endlessly about the cinema itself. Not that there was any ill-feeling; indeed I believe it was in the course of a very friendly dinner party that his wife, the actress Ingrid Thulin, had told Jacques Doniol-Valcroze that she had cancelled her subscription to *Cahiers du Cinéma*.

The fundamental cause of his tiredness with films, Schein thought, was not merely that he had said everything he had to say, but that everything he had thought in his initial enthusiasm for the medium had been said years before when “the film industry was in its infancy and the discoveries were real.” And that what was “new in filmic development is in fact the emergence of new generations of film critics rather than the rejuvenation of an artistic medium.”

Over the years, too, he had noted that he had begun thinking too much in relative terms, something which he had intended to avoid, and to suspend his critical faculties in favour of the kind of relaxed enjoyment that is “strictly for teenagers—for whom the cinema really seems to exist.” (A decade, one notes, has brought us from cooks to teenagers.) The film industry itself he knew was “probably largely unaware of the existence of the magazine,” but he had to put up with a good deal of abuse from readers as a result of his critical attitudes, which seemed to worry them more than the films themselves.

Schein was further tired by what seemed at the time a general levelling up and down of the product—“not only the peaks have been lost but also the lowest depths,” which was perhaps good from a social point of view, but bad for the art. This had been reflected in the state of Swedish film criticism, where the overall standard of daily reviewing had improved but serious public discussion had ceased to exist, other than of an academic kind among the new generation of critics who “appear paralysed by their own knowledge.”

It becomes clear, however, that it is criticism of which Schein is tired and the fact that “there are too few films of such interest that they at all merit a serious analysis before qualified but unspecialised readers.” A number of his concluding observations concern the situation of the film industry and film appreciation; and here he is, if not sanguine, at least not in despair. After giving up his column he began to examine what might be done about the cinema and eventually came up with an influential study of the relationship between the state and the arts called *Can We Afford Culture?* The suggestions outlined in this book he pursued publicly, and legislation followed. That extraordinary and far-sighted organisation the Swedish Film Institute was set up with Schein at its head.

In 1962, the year Schein published *Can We Afford Culture?*, *BLM* printed another valedictory. The author of this was Jörn Donner: it was called “Tired

of Films II" and dedicated to Harry Schein. Donner had been a critic in Finland for most of the Fifties, was *BLM's* film critic from 1959-61, and had just resigned after fifteen months as principal reviewer for Sweden's leading newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*. And he asked himself the question: "I wonder what it is that can make a critic so tired of film?"

Much of what he has to say is about the loss of his early vitality after helping to pioneer criticism in Finland, and the low standard of reviewing he found in Sweden. He also suggested, only half-humorously, that some of his fatigue was due to "the watchful eyes of distributors and press agents" forcing him to "observe a forced state of wakefulness." Regular reviewing in the press too seemed to be corrupting his style. Furthermore, critics over the years had done nothing to alter the deplorable state of the industry; in terms of ignorance there was little to choose between the two. In the course of fifteen months he had found "only ten films at the outside that one would really like to remember in the way that one remembers a good novel or a good play," and he began in his weariness to ask himself "was it really true that I had considered this art form the most interesting, most rewarding of all?" He was filled with "disappointment over thousands of missed opportunities."

After giving up criticism, Donner moved into the cinema himself and is currently shooting his fourth feature film. But I do not think it adequate to say that his dissatisfaction was simply that of a frustrated would-be filmmaker, any more than it would be to say that Tynan and Gibbs were 'natural' theatre critics wandering off course, or that Harry Schein was cut out to be an administrator, however more satisfactory they have found these roles. Equally I do not think it sufficient to say of all four that the fact that they wrote for general readers rather than film specialists was a principal cause of their unhappiness, though it would be impossible to disregard it as a factor. As I said at the outset, the fugitive film critic is a recurrent figure; and I have chosen this quartet because of the span of years and countries, because they are people of exceptional talent, and because between them they put up such a formidable range of personal and general arguments against the craft they were abandoning.

I've seen my main purpose here as noting the prevalence of this phenomenon, for it seems to have escaped the attention not only of the people I have quoted but also of those who have acted and written similarly. I don't wish to tackle their arguments individually or to argue the case for the function of criticism in general or of film criticism in particular. A great deal of what they say seems to me eminently reasonable

(in some aspects even self-evident) and I cannot altogether discount the possibility that they might be right. Yet as this is not my own valedictory article it can be assumed that at the moment I do not accept their conclusions. I should like, however, to make some tentative observations about the phenomenon itself.

The most obvious point is that the four people quoted do not question the practice of criticism in general, and it is a matter of experience that we are not regularly regaled with the sight of dramatic and literary critics throwing in the towel and questioning their erstwhile vocation. Yet as I've indicated in the case of Gibbs, and as can be demonstrated in the other instances, current theatre and literature in the periods in question offered nothing better than the cinema, and maybe something less attractive. Critics of other art forms, however, are fortified by sustaining traditions. They do not need to find their pleasures in the latest productions in their field, though certain pressures operate upon them to at least try. Anyway, no critic expects to find a dozen important new symphonies or novels or plays every year, let alone one a week.

Doubts can even be expressed as to whether a whole decade will enrich a particular art, and historical precedent exists for extending this judgment to a much greater period. This is not however true of the cinema. Not merely is it a young art, but one of which a tremendous amount has come to be expected. Fifty years ago it was regarded as a mere passing fad. And though this is no longer felt, there has always been a sense of urgency, as if it were all to come to an end very soon. Unable to attend on evolution, critics have demanded revolution. Back in the mid-Forties, for instance, James Agee argued that it was vital for the movies to take advantage of the next half dozen years before they were eclipsed by television. This sense of urgency has been compounded by the speed of technical development and innovation within the industry itself.

Yet the very fact that the cinema *is* an industry, and can scarcely operate on any other basis, is obviously one of the factors that tends to undermine the confidence of the critic. Unlike the other arts, most films are not being produced for *him*, for the limited section of the community of which he feels himself a part. They are being made for that mass society from which he himself is alienated and by an industrial complex, usually indifferent to his praise and strictures, that by its every word and action seems to express a hostility towards the values he himself espouses. (This is of course a gross exaggeration about the situation, but not about the way critics customarily feel.)

Despite this and contrary to all the evidence, the critic nevertheless believes that at any moment the cinema is about to "come of age." Thus we are con-

fronted with the appalling image of a tarted-up harridan forever on the point of celebrating her majority. There are other reasons too why so much is demanded of the cinema. Film has had so overpowering an effect in shaping the range of experience and consciousness of life of two generations that most of us carry with us an ideal concept of film, and an existential notion of living within a film, that nothing we actually see can fully measure up to.

A couple of other points about the role of the film critic as against critics of other media occur to me. One is that a critic feels he must see everything new that is offered—that he ought to be an expert on the movies of all countries in an infinity of fictional and documentary genres. The alternative can appear to be seeing nothing. Equally, instead of accepting the diversity of what is offered, some critics still seem to be after a general, all-embracing approach to film. Lawrence Alloway recently suggested for instance that "a unified theory" is "badly needed" and put forward "an approach to a descriptive criticism of the film, one that does not set out to exclude the popular movie." But this, in stressing the typical movie, makes the viewing of everything obligatory and can only reinforce those vogueish, intellectual memory games so brilliantly, and perhaps definitively, satirised in Wallace Markfield's novel *To An Early Grave*.

The other point is one stressed by Wolcott Gibbs—the incompetence of film critics. Generally it is only the mindless tipster in the popular press who is never touched by thoughts of his own possible incapacity. Most film critics from time to time must wonder exactly what their qualifications are for their job, or indeed what such qualifications should be. (One is not helped in this matter by examining the judgment over the years of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.) These doubts rarely assail the critics of the other arts in the same degree, which is not surprising when unimpeachable academic or quasi-academic credentials can be produced to validate their function.

What it all comes down to, I suppose, is that the film critic operates in a permanent state of personal insecurity, subject to peculiar stresses, doubts and anxieties. No wonder that so many of them seize the opportunity to escape, and purge themselves with public recantation.

Those who press on in the uneven struggle, and for whatever reason, might well bear in mind the words of Scott Fitzgerald. "The test of a first-rate intelligence," wrote Fitzgerald, "is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." The sentence comes in his essay "The Crack-Up."

Accident

John Russell Taylor

Photographs by Peter Theobald

AT LEAST I HAD READ the book. Nicholas Mosley's novel *Accident* was pressed into my hands by a friend who had to review it, with the urgent enquiry, was he mad, or did I dislike it as much as he did. The answer, on the whole, was yes. This was a couple of years ago now, and little of the book remained in my mind apart from a general impression of a lot of rather overwrought, self-consciously fine writing, and a perhaps rather interesting plot in there somewhere struggling obscurely to get out. It was about a group of Oxford dons and their wives, and the disturbing impact on their close circle of an attractive foreign girl and a bright young man student—the latter killed in the accident round which the other characters' dramas, especially Stephen's, through whose mind we dimly see everything, in a sense revolve.

So the news that Joseph Losey was going to film the book came as a bit of a surprise—a first reaction being, but what is there to film? That Harold Pinter was writing the script guaranteed that there would be something, and something interesting at that. And then there was Dirk Bogarde playing the lead—Stephen, presumably—and Stanley Baker, Delphine Seyrig . . . It was all, evidently, something to be seen in process. It would be interesting, and perhaps illuminating, to find out just how everybody saw the project at the start, and how all the pieces fitted together, before post-production jitters and rationalisations set in. That, in short, was what I meant to do, and what in early August, I set out to do.

* * *

Easier said than done, of course. To begin with, the unit were elusive. Locations in Oxford early in the shooting, then Cobham, Syon House, and back to the studio at Twickenham. Could I perhaps catch them at Syon? My first contact was with Losey himself, whom I shamelessly rang up at 10 p.m., when I was fairly sure he would be back from a day's shooting. He was, but only just, between the door and a bath. Still, he was very forbearing: of course I might come, but things were really very complicated and he didn't know how they would arrange themselves in the next few days. Would they be at Syon, I ventured. No, those locations had been moved forward from tomorrow and the day after tomorrow to yesterday and the day before yesterday. You see, said Losey, the trouble is the sun. There are certain scenes in this picture that just must be shot in dazzling summer heat, and we haven't had any. By next week we'll know: either we've had three days of sun and got them done, or we're in trouble. Whichever way it is, we'll probably be in the studio, so come along and take your chance with the rest of us.

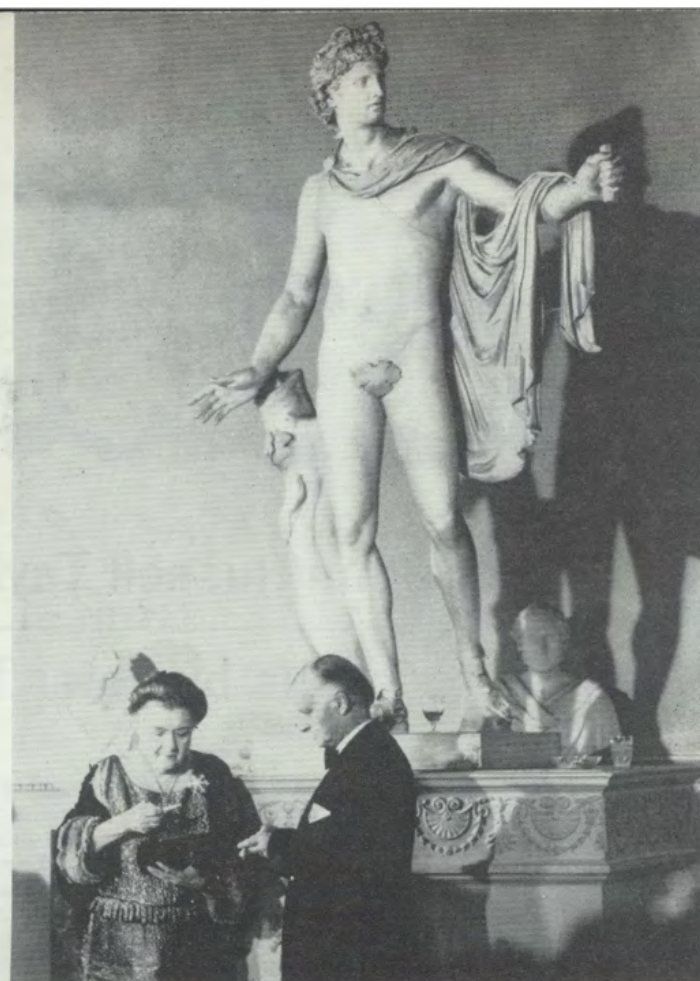
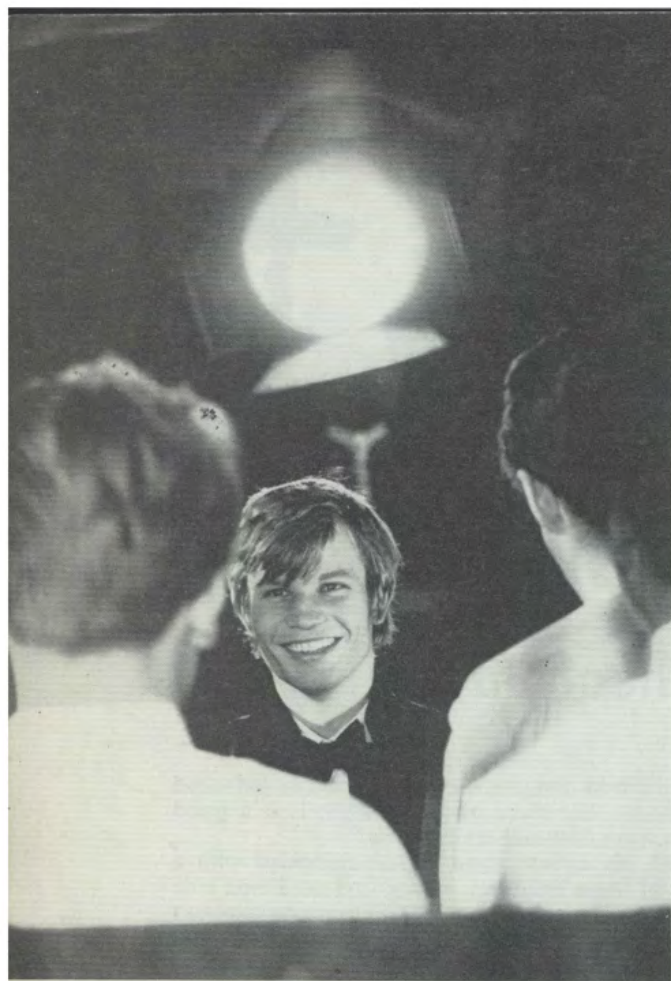
Fair enough. In the intervening days the sun was fitful at best, and when I arrived at Twickenham the unit had been shooting on set for a week but gazing out wistfully at the sky and racing for Cobham whenever the sun peeped through.

Not, obviously, the best circumstances for sane and balanced views from anybody—but then, after all, when is it a good time to get those from film-makers at work?

As it happened, my arrival more or less coincided with a return from one of these lightning jaunts, and so I was able to catch the designer Carmen Dillon and lighting cameraman Gerry Fisher together and for once at rest. To start with first things first, what I wanted to know from them was, did the film, like most of Losey's, have a 'look', and if so what was it? Carmen Dillon, on this film working with Losey for the first time, answered at once: "No, not really. At least its look is that of not having a look, of avoiding any obtrusive visual stylisation. It's very much a film about people who appear to be ordinary, and perhaps are, though during the film we learn what depths of violence and uncontrollable emotion they constantly skirt. So in the sets we have concentrated on making everything look used, lived in, believable as a background for them: in real life no one ever has six matching coffee-cups because two have got broken and they have to use something else that doesn't match. That's the sort of feeling I've tried to get in the sets."

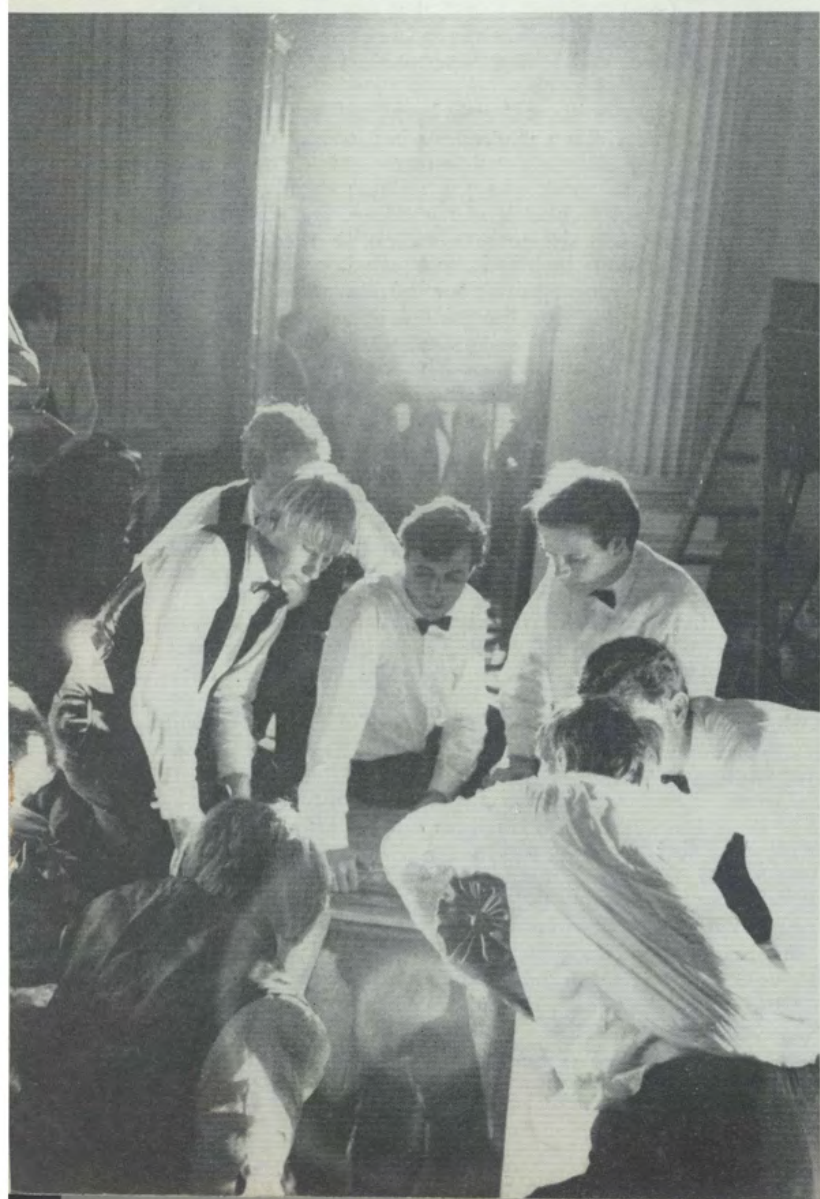
Realism above all, then, I said. "No . . . a step down from strict realism, a toning down or selection. In colour, for instance, we are limiting our range beyond what basic realism would dictate, trying to make a colour film almost in monochrome, with just occasional accents of colour." Colour? I said. I didn't know the film was in colour; somehow I'd pictured it in black and white. "Yes," said Gerry Fisher, "it was originally planned that way. But these days there is always a purely economic pressure to make films in colour, because of the eventual possibility of sale to colour television. So it was decided to make the film in colour. But I think anyway the decision was the right one: it makes it all much more interesting to use colour in this way, to make points by its absence rather than its presence. Of course, it's not always easy: interiors you can control, but exteriors . . ." Carmen Dillon: "Yes, get some sun on the wall of an Oxford college and it glows like jewels; there's nothing you can do about that."

Anyway, I said, it could all hardly be more different from *Modesty Blaise*, the last Losey film on which Gerry Fisher worked (as camera operator). It was almost as though since *Eva* he had decided to alternate the ornate and flamboyant—*The Servant*, *Modesty Blaise*—with more restrained, toned-down subjects—*King and Country*, *Accident*. Gerry Fisher: "Not really. It does look like that, but you have to remember that *Modesty Blaise* wasn't really a film of his own choosing. Obviously, if it was to be made at all, it had to be made like that; but I think it was a special style for a special film, and not necessarily representative of what Losey might ideally have chosen to do at that stage. In general I would say that



Photographs taken during filming at Syon House.
Far left: Michael York.
Left: Baroness Moura Budberg as one of the party guests.
Below: master shot of the sequence, with the film camera shooting upwards from somewhere in the rugby scrum.
Right: Dirk Bogarde.
Below right: Losey and cameraman Gerry Fisher.





this film continues a trend of *The Servant* and *King and Country*, towards something much more restrained and sober, altogether less visually flamboyant and closer to the characters." Carmen Dillon: "Oh yes, no mirrors, no cages. Far, far less mannered than any of his recent films . . ."

* * *

By now they were on the set and preparing to shoot, so over I went. It was a complex, sustained scene involving a dinner at Stephen's, with Dirk Bogarde, Vivien Merchant as his wife, Stanley Baker as their old friend, a successful television don, Michael York as the undergraduate, and Jacqueline Sassard as the foreign girl whose presence begins the trouble, or at least brings latent troubles to a head. All the men are pretty drunk, and in the course of a barbed, indirect conversation in the best Pinter manner the resentments bubbling underneath look dangerously like breaking through the brittle surface of civilisation. It is rehearsed all through three times, mainly for the actors, though simultaneously a rather intricate course for the camera is plotted out so that the whole thing can be covered in one master-shot (I suppose, though maybe not, to be followed by close-ups). After the rehearsals, and while they light the set, director and cast retire to plan the scene further, and spend nearly half an hour deep in discussion.

At last Losey is satisfied—for the moment anyway—and they break for five minutes and a cup of tea. Chance to trap Stanley Baker, marooned on a plush settee in Stephen's living-room (I note, incidentally, that for all the subdued realism of the film, these dons seem to live in a style considerably more elevated and glamorous than any married don I know). I accuse him of playing another Losey intellectual. "Another? Have I played one before? The characters in *The Criminal* and *Blind Date* could hardly be more unintellectual." But *Eva*? "Well, yes, in a way. But then he's a pseudo-intellectual. And so is this man in *Accident*, only a little less so: he has become one, corrupted by television celebrity, success . . ." Obviously, I said, you must enjoy working with Losey since this is the fourth film you've made with him. "He's a marvellous director for actors, and by now I think we understand each other pretty well. When I say that he's a good director for actors, by the way, I mean just that: he's good *for* actors. When actors talk of someone as an actors' director, they usually mean one who lets them have their own way as much as possible and keeps them smoothed down by telling them they are marvellous. Joe never does that, but he does know, better than any other director I've ever encountered, how to help actors and get the best out of actors.

"To begin with, he really gets to know his actors, their whole histories and what makes them tick—I think that's one of the reasons he likes to use the same actors often. This means that when you come up against something you just cannot see how to do, some line you think you can't say, he always knows how to help you out of it. Where many directors just wring their hands, and many more hand out some sort of generalised *Reader's Digest* psychology, Joe can really get to you because he knows you well enough to see what experiences he can call on, what sides of your temperament, to get what he wants out of you."

Was this film making very different calls from the other Losey films he had worked on? "For me, certainly, but I think probably for all of us. For me it's a much less extravagant, extrovert part, though in the context of the film I am a relatively extrovert figure. But in *The Criminal* and *Blind Date*, and almost as much in *Eva*, the characters had interesting, picturesque, extravagant exteriors, and the actor wasn't called on to dig so deep into them. Of course I enjoyed that—what actor doesn't enjoy playing someone colourful and a bit larger than life? But this is in many ways more interesting because the characters in this film are all beneath the surface: everything happens in their minds, and in the electric gap between them. To play it you really have to dig into yourself, and bank all the fires down. The script is extraordinary: to read the dialogue you would say that most of it was just slight exchanges of small talk, that there was nothing to it. But once we get together, so many characters in a room, and start to say

the lines and live the action, suddenly everything becomes clear, you know just what is going on behind the masks, just what violent emotions the clipped civilised conversation covers. And this something hidden behind and beneath is what Joe is getting on to the screen: I think this could easily be his best film."

* * *

Next on my list was Dirk Bogarde, whom I ran to earth a couple of days later, tearing his hair in his dressing-room and muttering darkly, "I don't know how the hell I'm going to make an omelette in that kitchen, much less feed Stanley Baker with it . . ." Be that as it might, though, he seemed thoroughly cheerful about the film in general, the way it was going, and his own part in it. "When Joe first told me about it I asked him, quite simply, 'What sort of a film is it going to be, what sort of film do you want to make?' He looked at me for a minute, to see that I wasn't being smart, and then he said, 'The perfect film. This time I'm going to make the perfect film. I've got the perfect script, the perfect cast, the perfect crew. All I need now is the sun for as long as it takes.' And really that's just how it has been. The script is fantastic—I think the best script Harold has done. It's so sharp, and spare, and pared down. And the cast, well, I can't imagine how we could fit more perfectly together . . ."

Interesting particularly, I said, to see him and Stanley Baker together in a Losey film—Losey's two worlds brought together, as it were. "In head-on collision? Not quite, actually, though our characters in the film are pretty antagonistic under the surface. I wondered myself how it would work out, but in the event I think it bears out Joe's judgment absolutely—it's a marvellous matching of contrasted flavours, a real strong country Cheddar and a more delicate, insidious Demi . . ." I had gathered, I said, that this was going to be a very plain, severe, self-denying sort of Losey film; I wondered whether the absence of Richard Macdonald from the line-up had anything to do with this.

"In a way, I suppose so, but only because Joe wants it that way. You see, Richard is a marvellous improvisator, an ideas man who throws off dazzling notions every minute of the day and leaves others to work out the prosaic details. This is exactly right for a film like *Modesty Blaise*. But Carmen is a completely practical designer from top to toe; she is a professionally trained architect and all her designs are calculated exactly to *work*. In this sort of film, which is meant to have its feet very much on the ground, she is ideal, because she observes so closely and knows exactly how to translate what she sees on to the studio floor. The house set, for instance, is quite uncanny, it matches the exterior so exactly, with no cheating at all (well, maybe an extra foot in the hall, to get the camera in). And it is so meticulously detailed according to the way people like this actually live that it aids the actor enormously when he is playing in it." (Stanley Baker too had commented on the sets, observing that it was often the intangible unnoticeables, like set design and even camera lighting, which were most likely to throw an actor's timing off if they were wrong.)

Someone quoted Losey as saying when he began the film that he was going to make it as a continuous texture, without defined sequences, and without exits and entrances. Dirk Bogarde laughed: "I don't know about that—I seem to do nothing in this film but sweep in and out of doors, get in and out of cars. But I do know what he means: the whole film is based on strange time-shifts, a bit like what Resnais does in *La Guerre est Finie*, only more consistently. In fact the whole action is seen as refracted through my mind (I didn't work this out till we'd been shooting several days, which will show how bright I am!), and so one memory sets off another, and scenes that take place in widely different times and places actually appear on the screen simultaneously.

"We've just been doing the second half of one: I am sitting with Vivien (Merchant), who plays my wife, in her garden on an absolutely sweltering summer day, heavy with lassitude, sticky and uncomfortable, and we talk about the other couple's (Stanley Baker and Ann Firbank's) marital difficulties and what if anything I can do. And this sets off recollection

of another occasion when I actually go and talk to Ann Firbank about it in a torrential downpour, with everything sopping and miserable. And in the montage these scenes will be intercut, because in Stephen's mind they are inextricable. This will be something quite new for Losey, and partly because the structure is so complex the visual style will be very simple and direct—no bare feet, no mirrors, nothing fancy. And if, every now and then, he looks like getting a little fancy, I kick him . . .”

* * *

With all this discussion of the script and the way it worked, it seemed about time to talk to Harold Pinter himself, and this I was able to do a few days later again, off on location one weekend when the sun was supposed to be shining (but of course wasn't) a few miles outside Esher. Our conversation, as a matter of fact, was rather like a scene in some sub-Antonioni film: a country lane, the fields stretching blandly away to either side, two solitary figures walking away from the farm and human contact towards a distant gate across the road (locked and barred, symbolically no doubt) and then back, talking, talking, and as they do so changing places, now one, now the other drawing ahead, or stopping to make or illustrate a point. Very pretty it would have looked, no doubt, in very distant long-shot or in sustained, artfully casual travellings. What we actually said, though, was far more practical and to the point than film conversations in such circumstances usually are.

Pinter: “It was Losey who first sent me the book. He wanted to do it, and when I had read it I wanted to do it.

I think we wanted to do it for the same reasons. We thought a lot about how it should be done, and worked together very closely on it. At first we thought of perhaps trying to do it the way the book does, to find a direct film equivalent to the free-association, stream-of-consciousness style of the novel. I tried a draft that way, but it just wouldn't work—anyway, I couldn't do it. You see, suppose a character is walking down a lane, this lane, as we are now. You could easily note down a stream of thought which might be perfectly accurate and believable, and then translate it into a series of images: road, field, hedge, grass, corn, wheat, ear, her ear on the pillow, tumbled hair, love, love years ago . . . But when one's mind wanders and associates things in this way it's perfectly unselfconscious. Do exactly the same thing on film and the result is precious, self-conscious, over-elaborate—you're using absurdly complex means to convey something very simple. Instead, you should be able to convey the same sort of apprehension not by opening out, proliferating, but by closing in, looking closer and closer, harder and harder at things that are there before you.

“For example, it seems to me that *Marienbad* works very well in its own terms, on the level of fantasy. But there is another way of doing it, and one I personally would find more interesting to explore. In a real, recognisable Paris an ordinary, reasonably attractive woman sits at a café table, wearing what she would be wearing, eating and drinking what she would be eating and drinking. An equally ordinary, everyday sort of man comes up to her. ‘Excuse me, but don't you remember, we met last year at Marienbad?’ ‘Marienbad? Impossible—I was never in Marienbad last year . . .’ and she gets up, walks

BREAK IN THE ACTION DURING THE SHOOTING AT SYON HOUSE.

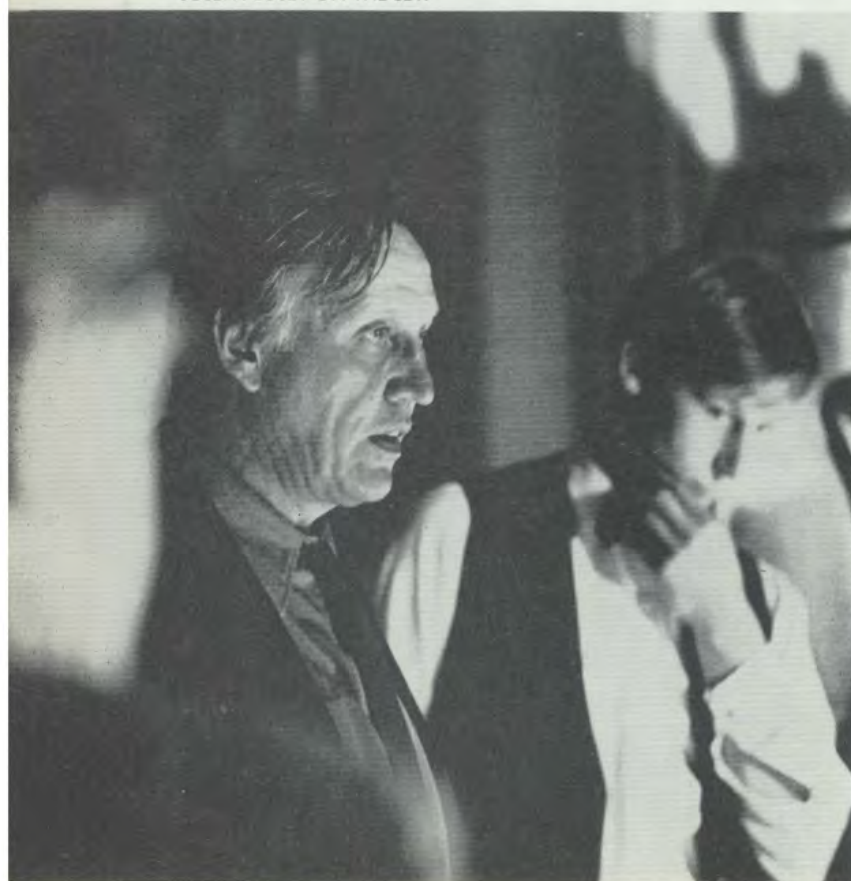


out to an ordinary, believable street and gets into a real taxi . . . And so on. Wouldn't that be just as strange and mysterious and frightening as the way the film does it? Perhaps more so, because of the very ordinariness of the surroundings and apparent normality of the characters.

"It's something of that sort of feeling we're trying to get here. In the book, for example, there is a scene in which Stephen, coming home, sees a car outside his house and Charlie (Stanley Baker) standing by it. To convey what effect this has on him the novel needs a couple of pages of free association. But in the film, it seems to me, all that can be conveyed just by the shot of what he sees, photographed in a certain way, held on the screen for a certain length of time, with the two characters in the sort of relationship to each other that we know to exist already. It's just the same as the way that a novelist may need five or six pages to introduce a character, to tell us what we need to know about his appearance, age, bearing, education, social background and so on. In a film the actor just walks into a room and it's done, it's all there—or should be. So in this film everything is buried, it is implicit. There is really very little dialogue, and that is mostly trivial, meaningless. The drama goes on inside the characters, and by looking hard at the smooth surface we come to see something of what is going on underneath.

"Take the character of Stephen's wife. She doesn't do anything significant, she doesn't say anything significant; she knows from the start that Stephen is attracted to the girl, and that the other man is mad for her too. And Stephen knows that she knows. And life continues, with these strains present and recognised by both, spoken of directly by neither: if anything directly preoccupies Rosalind, it is that she is pregnant. Then in this situation, something happens: the young man is killed in an accident. And this changes things, it makes all the unlocalised, unformulated guilt sharper, nearer the surface. But still the unforgivable, unforgettable things are never said, things are never actually brought to a showdown: life goes on and people, knowing perfectly well what gulfs they are skirting, do their best to keep things going, to let them work themselves out. One thing happens, and then another;

JOSEPH LOSEY ON THE SET.



and eventually an episode closes, and something else begins.

"The novel ends with the birth and survival of Stephen and Rosalind's baby; this is a big thing, brought out like this as the saving grace, the one new thing that makes everything right for them. Well, in life of course babies are born, and parents are happy about it, or sometimes they die, and parents are very upset about it: babies *are* born, babies *do* die. But in a film . . . I don't know—there is always the danger that it will seem as though the baby was brought in just as a device, to live or to die to tie things up neatly. I thought and thought about it, and discussed it with Nicholas Mosley, and in the end I decided to make it as much an ordinary happening, one moment in a continuing life, as possible. The baby is born, and it lives, just, and that is that. The fact has no special result—Stephen gets the news that the baby will live, he accepts it, it has happened and things go on . . ."

J.R.T.: "I have always thought that there is a lot to be said for drama which uses, as it were, only the most elementary syntax of a child's story-telling: 'and then . . . and then . . . and then . . .' Without all the because and therefore and notwithstanding of psychological drama."

Pinter: "What you are saying is biblical, it's holy writ for a dramatist—well, for me anyway. I do so hate the because of drama. Who are we to say that this happens because that happened, that one thing is the consequence of another? How do we know? What reason have we to suppose that life is so neat and tidy? The most we know for sure is that the things which have happened have happened in a certain order: any connections we think we see, or choose to make, are pure guesswork. Life is much more mysterious than plays make it out to be. And it is this mystery which fascinates me: what happens between the words, what happens when no words are spoken . . . In this film everything happens, nothing is explained. It has been pared down and down, all unnecessary words and actions are eliminated. If it is interesting to see a man cross a room, then we see him do it; if not, then we leave out the insignificant stages of the action. I think you'll be surprised at the directness, the simplicity with which Losey is directing this film: no elaborations, no odd angles, no darting about. Just a level, intense look at people, at things. As though if you look at them hard enough they will give up their secrets. Not that they will, for however much you see and guess at there is always that something more . . ."

* * *

And finally, two days later, the master himself. It has been, at long last, a day of blinding, blistering sunlight, and at last the locations have gone right. At the end of shooting Losey is happy and relaxed and ready to talk—briefly but to the point: "Realistic colour? I don't know about that—I don't really believe such a thing exists on film. But I suppose the colour in *Accident* is more like that in *Muriel* than anything else. It is used apparently without arrangement or calculation, just because it is there, and with none of the frantic signalling Antonioni indulges in in *Deserto Rosso*, but in fact it is all very carefully designed to select and highlight so that—I hope—it will work subliminally on an audience. Simple? Yes, I think the style of this film really is simple. Not altogether: I guess the sort of Eton wall-game sequence we shot at Syon House will give people all the handle they want to call it baroque. But really, most of this film is more simple and direct than any of my recent films: it is the style imposed by the subject and the script. What sort of film is it; what is it essentially about? Let me see, there's one piece from the novel which I noted down that I think gets to the heart of it—the method and the subject . . ."

The extract read:

"I wish I could say what I mean about all this. There are two things, first, that people are not characters but things moving occasionally in jumps and mostly in indiscernible slowness; and secondly the opposite, that we each of us had in a way got what we wanted . . ."

THE SKULL BENEATH THE SKIN



Tom Milne

FIRST IMPRESSIONS CAN BE MISLEADING, and there is something very wrong with the image of Kon Ichikawa—arrived at mainly by way of *The Burmese Harp*, *Conflagration* and *Fires on the Plain*—as a man obsessed by human suffering and expressing his pity through a series of long, slow, painful, humanistic affirmations. Ichikawa is obsessed by suffering all right, but he is not a humanist in any modern sense of the word (“I look around for some kind of humanism, but I never seem to find it,” he himself accurately observes). It isn’t merely that until the recent NFT season we had little opportunity to see the other, lighter side of Ichikawa’s work: the humanistic definition imposes much too narrow limits, and could only grapple with a film like *The Key* by sweeping its almost mockingly flippant final sequence tidily away under the carpet as “silly”.

Re-viewing a film like *Fires on the Plain* (1959) with the hindsight acquired by having seen another ten miscellaneous Ichikawa films, one is immediately struck by its central ambiguity. As Private Tamura turns from the stench of death in the plains, rejecting the final debasement of cannibalism to stagger resolutely towards the gentle plumes of smoke rising from the farmers’ fires on the hills, one is tempted to agree with David Robinson (quoted in the NFT programme booklet) that he is emerging from an Inferno, and that “Ichikawa’s fires are those of purification.” And yet—purification of what? It is here that doubt sets in. By refusing the temptation of cannibalism, does Tamura expiate the relish with which he earlier murdered the Filipino boy and girl in cold blood (and in what sort of moral balance does one weigh the two crimes)? By throwing away his life, to preserve which he has gone through this inferno and for which he has lied, cheated and killed, does he somehow become more human?

When *Fires on the Plain* was first shown in London five years ago, more than one reviewer reproached Ichikawa for his departure from the ending of the novel by Shōhei Ōoka on which the film is based. In the novel, Tamura ends up in a mental hospital, where he meditates on the meaning of his experiences and on the existence of a God who has guided him safely through them; in the film, he simply turns to the hills, towards “people who are leading normal lives,” and is shot dead. The difference is an important one, and surely deliberate on Ichikawa’s part. Ōoka’s ending is an expression of faith in man and in the possibility of spiritual progress. Ichikawa’s is the exact opposite: his hero puts his trust in man, only to find that his “people leading normal lives” are still vengeful Filipino peasants, full of hate and determined to avenge their sufferings. Ichikawa is too honest (and too little of a mystic) to suggest that the repentance of a single sinner will bring rejoicing in heaven and restore the harmony of the spheres. At the end of *Fires on the Plain*, Tamura may possibly have become purified by his sufferings; what is certain is that the world around him has not.

The Ichikawa hero—not only in *Fires on the Plain* but throughout his work—is essentially an outsider, a man struggling to escape from the world in which he lives, rather than to change it or even accept it as he finds it. He may seem to take the sins of the world on his shoulders, but less to atone for them than to protect himself. In *The Burmese Harp* (1956), appalled by the endless piles of war-dead strewn in his path, he becomes a priest, preferring both physical and spiritual exile to living among people like himself; in *Conflagration* (1958), he destroys the only thing he loves to preserve it (and by implication himself) from contamination. The key to both films is the hero’s total rejection of life while clinging desperately to a personal ideal. In *Conflagration*, the ideal is represented by the Golden Pavilion of Kyoto, the national art treasure

LEFT: “THE BURMESE HARP”.

which has no other function than to be admired for its serene, immovable beauty. "I forget this filthy world just by thinking about it," says the hero's father, from whom he inherits his worship of the temple. But the "filthy world" has its revenge, and Ichikawa watches with a kind of helpless pity as his heroes are defeated by it, whether they advance to meet it (like Tamura in *Fires on the Plain*), or retreat from it (like the young soldier of *The Burmese Harp* and the novice priest of *Conflagration*). The ambiguity remains, of course. One can argue that, in his own way, each hero triumphs; but at the same time one is left with an overriding impression of futility. Tamura is dead, the temple is burned, and a soldier prays for the dead; but the filthy world remains the filthy world. There is no harmony here, no reconciliation between material and spiritual such as one finds in, say, *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*, or even *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Filtering through these films—and perhaps revealing a tension between Ichikawa and his source material (all three are adapted from novels)—comes a strange, snarling bitterness of despair. And it is when one turns to *The Key* (1959), with its sometimes mocking, sometimes deadly serious analysis of obsessive sexuality, and its bizarre final holocaust in which the three surviving members of the family quartet die from poison at the hand of the faithful old retainer, that one begins to get a more accurate slant on Ichikawa himself. The film opens with a young doctor, square in the middle of the screen, offering intimations of mortality in the shape of a lecture on the physical debilities which lie inescapably in wait for man during his progress through life, detailing the precise ages at which a man can expect his faculties to begin to atrophy. This gloating catalogue ends with a diabolical chuckle ("You too!" he assures the audience) which irresistibly recalls the relish for the horrors of physical decay which marked the Jacobean dramatists. "Webster was much possessed by death And saw the skull beneath the skin," goes T. S. Eliot's celebrated *homage*; and in his essay on "Four Elizabethan Dramatists," he observed that "Even the philosophical basis, the general attitude toward life of the Elizabethans, is one of anarchism, of dissolution, of decay."

Eliot's description might apply equally well to a host of modern writers, with Beckett at their head; but whereas Webster is dominated by relish and Beckett by pain, in Ichikawa the two go hand in hand. It is a landscape of anarchism, dissolution and decay from which the heroes of *The Burmese Harp*, *Conflagration* and *Fires on the Plain* recoil in anguish, and which recurs throughout Ichikawa's work wherever his raw material is sympathetic (and sometimes where it is not). In these three films, Ichikawa's involvement with the anguish is too deep to allow him to draw back, to set his sense of the futility of his characters' struggles to escape their dilemma in a proper perspective; but in his more characteristic, and perhaps greater films—*The Key*, *The Revenge of Yukinojo*, and (in a slightly different way) *The Heart*—the anguish and the mockery are inextricably mingled.

The Key, for instance, is an irresistibly funny film, full of keyhole-peeping, nocturnal wanderings and heavy breathing; and yet, as each of the four major characters aids and abets the others' odd obsessions, fully aware of how they themselves are being manoeuvred, they are all the time performing a terrifying dance of death in which, starting as normal people living normal lives, they withdraw further and further from reality into absurdity. When the old man lies in bed paralysed from a stroke, and at his unspoken request his wife strips before him, knowing that the sight of her naked body must kill him, the scene could hardly be bettered as a ghoulish Websterian jest. And yet it also contains, in the old man's ecstasy, a strange kind of poignancy, a feeling that he might happily have chosen just this way to die.

Even more than *The Key*, *The Revenge of Yukinojo* (1963) conjures up the aura of the Jacobean, with a grisly revenge plot, comic sub-plot, and ironic final twist which might have flowed entire from the pen of either Webster or Tourneur. The actor Yukinojo, a female impersonator, is in a way the perfect Ichikawa hero. As a female impersonator (*en ville* as well as on

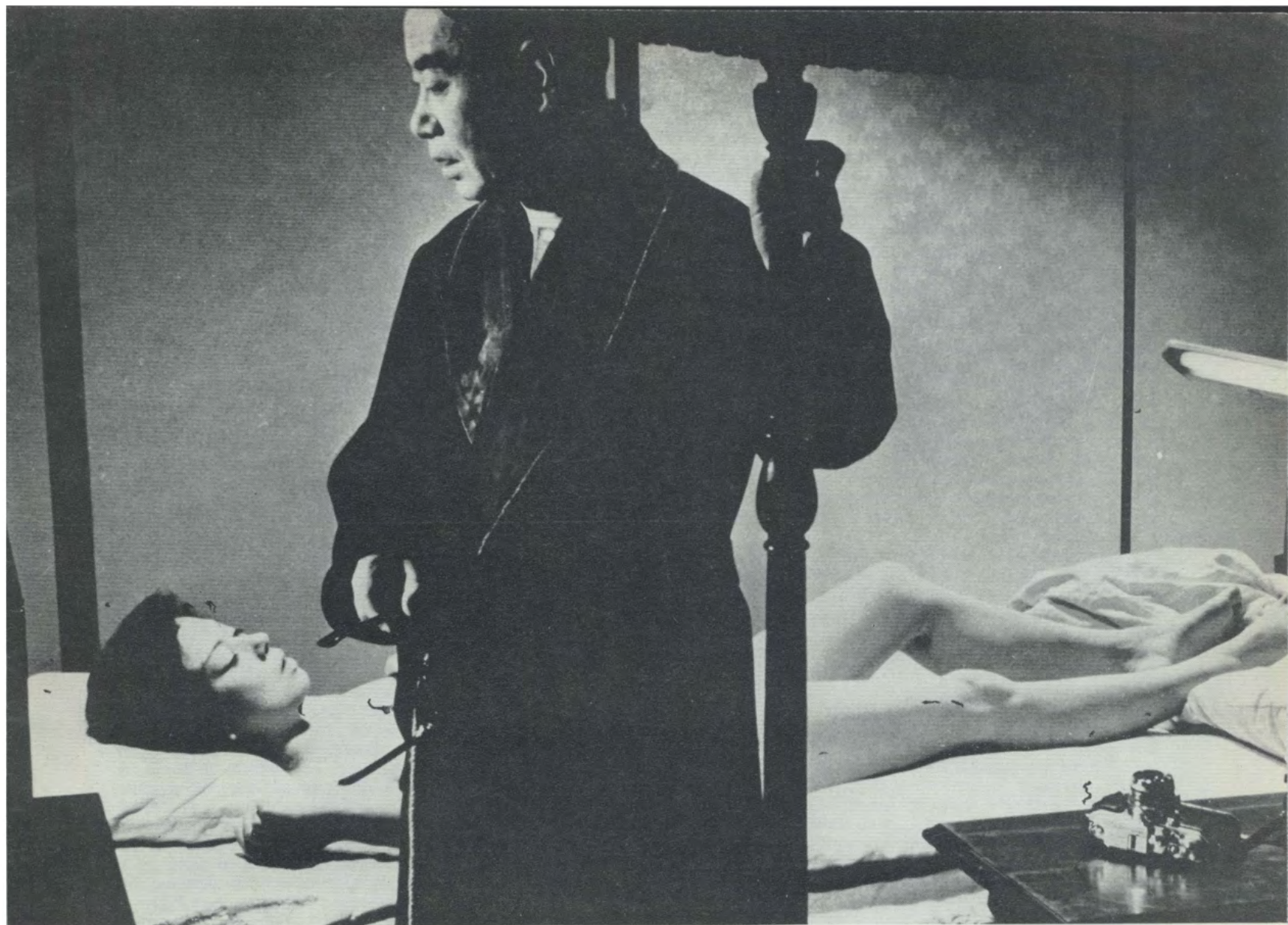
stage, as was the Japanese custom), he has withdrawn from his proper place in society; but when he is forced by convention to revenge his parents, who were driven to madness and ruin by a triumvirate of scheming businessmen when he was a mere child, he is called upon to reassume a place he can no longer fill. Ichikawa plays happily, and brilliantly, with the paradox of the twittering, trembling hero who suddenly sheds his disguise to close with his enemy, delicately and victoriously parrying the latter's sword-thrusts with a tiny dagger. But Yukinojo is securely trapped in the kind of limbo he has built for himself. As part of his revenge plan, he makes use of a girl who has fallen in love with him and who happens to be the daughter of one of his intended victims. As a result she dies, and Yukinojo finds that his pretended affection, stimulated by pity, has come very close to the real thing. In a beautiful, intensely moving sequence he mourns over her dead body, promising to make amends: "If there is a next world we will become one, and in that way my false vow will become true." But this is again deception. Yukinojo has already quitted any world in which he might love her, and once his revenge is complete he returns to his true love—his male master and friend at the theatre.

The sub-plot, a comic one in the best tradition, cunningly echoes this theme of man's relationship to society in a much more overt manner. The Robin Hood-style thief who befriends Yukinojo is dominated by a girl-friend much more dashing and courageous than he is. At the end of the film, having decided that she is growing too old for such male exploits, she offers too late to yield up her leadership: the male thief laconically declares that he has now decided he has no use for women, and is thinking of taking to the stage as an apprentice female impersonator.

Visually, the film is one of Ichikawa's most striking successes, obviously owing much to Kabuki, but also oddly reminiscent of modern-style Elizabethan staging in its use of bare stages, black drapes and simple structural shapes to allow the director to indulge his favourite composition of a single figure picked out against some architectural detail. Most of the extraordinarily effective exteriors look unashamedly stagey, perfectly calculated to evoke the sort of no-man's-land between two worlds in which the main action takes place (the two worlds being represented, on the one hand by the glittering expanse of the Kabuki stage, on the other by the ordinary, cosy room where Yukinojo meets the girl who loves him).

This no-man's-land is a sort of conjuror's dream, where figures suddenly materialise out of nowhere, a lasso streaks out of the darkness like a glittering serpent, swords flash and strike almost of their own volition—and the exteriors follow suit: the empty street with its towering grey wall where Yukinojo meets his swordsman enemy in a blinding circle of light cut out of the surrounding darkness; the mist-shrouded heath with a ghostly forest looming behind where the heroine is driven to murder; the field of waving corn into which Yukinojo finally plunges, mysteriously disappearing towards his self-inflicted oblivion.

The effect at times is almost of Arabian Nights spectacle, but it also reflects Yukinojo's anguish at his predicament. Here, the visual style is very different from the lyrical compositions of the trio of war films, where the pensive hero is gently integrated into a dreamlike landscape (horrific, as with the endless vistas of dead and dying in *The Burmese Harp* and *Fires on the Plain*, or opiate, as with the vision of the Golden Pavilion in *Conflagration*). Instead, as in *The Key*, the lines are sharp and jagged, with the characters viewed much closer and at odd angles, uncomfortably trapped in doorways, isolated by a wall, cut off by shafts of light, as though overpowered by their surroundings. Kazuo Miyagawa, Ichikawa's favourite cameraman (who also frequently worked with Mizoguchi), uses heavy backlighting, shadows and brilliant pools of light, with a boldness which makes his colour camerawork incomparably rich: as much as anything, it is his subtle textures which convey the sense of anguish in these films, the sense of dead-white flesh consumed by the fires of darkness.



IMAGES FROM ICHIKAWA'S WORLD. HUSBAND AND WIFE IN
"THE KEY", THE FEMALE IMPERSONATOR IN "THE REVENGE OF
YUKINOJO", FLASHBACK TO LOST FRIENDSHIP IN "THE HEART".

Before turning to *The Heart*, another masterpiece but one which works rather differently, one should perhaps briefly consider some of the earlier and minor films. Here one has to tread carefully, because as Ichikawa himself confesses, he often had to do as he was told, and it isn't always easy to be sure how much he is involved with the subject. Take *Bonchi*, for instance, a comparatively late (1960) film which Ichikawa was apparently told to make. One would have thought that its story of a young man oppressed by a society in which women wield the power and demand daughters, while he can only produce sons from a variety of wives and mistresses, would have appealed strongly to him. Yet the film is lackadaisically done, with a stylish but flabby central stretch. The beginning is scathingly brilliant, with the hero's mother and grandmother solemnly scanning the lavatory pan for portents of his young wife's intimate secrets, and then cruelly forcing a divorce when she finally bears him a son. So is the end, after the fall of the matriarchal house during a wartime bombing raid, when the hero finally shakes off mother and grandmother, only to find that his three mistresses have been busily gathering power and are now by no means dependent on him. Though beautifully designed and constructed, the film as a whole somehow betrays a lack of involvement.

The same thing is true of *Her Brother* (1960) and *Punishment Room* (1956), the first a rather weepy tale of a spinsterish girl whose adored younger brother dies of tuberculosis, the second a cut-to-pattern addition to Japan's juvenile delinquency cycle. *Her Brother* is extremely good of its kind; *Punishment Room* is less so, though containing some brilliant sequences which lift it out of the rut, notably the very effective simplicity of the scene in which the boy is called off the rugger-field by the girl he has raped, and they just stare at each other, endlessly. In both cases Ichikawa contrives to turn the principal character into one of his typical outsiders: the girl in *Her Brother* being cut off from pursuing her own life and marrying by her single-minded devotion to her wayward brother, the young delinquent of *Punishment Room* by his anarchic refusal to admit that he belongs either to society or to its outlaws. By Ichikawa standards, however, they are undistinguished works, although here and there one does find welcome flashes of his avid mockery (a fine example comes when the boy in *Her Brother*, who has constantly extracted money from his sister to pay for his playboy extravagances, finally contracts tuberculosis, gloomily contemplates the face he assumes will soon be mere skin and bone, and thinks up a new extravagance—having himself photographed).

More interesting are the earlier comedies, *Poo-San* (1953) and *A Billionaire* (1954). Although the former is based on a popular cartoon strip, it is difficult to see in it any reminder of Ichikawa's early days as a cartoonist and his avowed devotion to Walt Disney. If one hadn't seen *Being Two Isn't Easy* (1962), in fact, an innocuous comedy which deals with much feyness and some charm with the problems of infancy as seen from the points of view of both parents and child, the Disney angle would be very hard to credit. Certainly there is no sign of Disneyism in either *A Billionaire* or *Poo-San*, which are quite distinctly Ichikawa films in miniature.

Superficially, both of these films bear out Ichikawa's early reputation as the Japanese Frank Capra. Their heroes are simple, honest, little men, and the timid tax-collector of *A Billionaire* even wages a single-handed war against tax evasion, pitting his naïve honesty against national cunning. The difference is that this humble tax-collector, and the ineffectual mathematics teacher of *Poo-San*, also live under the shadow of their dread of war. The mathematics teacher tremblingly takes shelter in a police station from a file of military lorries rumbling past, only to encounter there weird visions, every bit as terrifying to him, of murderers staggering one by one out of the night to give themselves up; in a cinema he watches a newsreel of a nuclear test where (one of Ichikawa's best jokes) the projector breaks down in mushroom clouds of smoke; and in the end he sits pondering his motionless image in the mirror, telling himself "How simple to go mad."

In *A Billionaire*, where everyone seems to boast of belonging to a larger family than anyone else, so that numbers recur like an incantation of souls to be lost or saved, Ichikawa takes his grim, deadly-earnest jest a stage further. The tax-collector, who goes berserk when it clouds over because he is afraid that rain is contaminated, is irresistibly drawn to a family living in a broken-down shack with quantities of children and a girl lodger who is busily constructing a home-made A-Bomb in the attic. Driven by their misery and poverty, the parents finally exterminate themselves and their children with a meal of radioactive tuna fish, while the tax-collector and the sole surviving member of the family run from the A-Bomb in the attic. The final image, of the two separating in panic at a crossroads and still running, is as apocalyptic as anything the cinema has produced. *A Billionaire* may not sound like a comedy, but it is. Or is it?

* * *

It is easy to trace a direct line of descent from *A Billionaire* and *Poo-San* to *The Key* and *The Revenge of Yukinojo*. The other, more lyrical, more "socially responsible" line descending from the trio of war films, seems to end up a curious byway with *Hakai* (*The Sin*, 1962). Here, Ichikawa delves into Hollywood problem picture territory with a story, set in 1904, of a pariah boy who is a member of Japan's outcast tribe, and whose tribulations are an exact replica of those experienced by the Negro who passes for white (in *Lost Boundaries*, for instance). As no one knows that he is an outcast, the boy is able to complete his education and win a job as a school-teacher, though his terror of discovery makes him withdraw into himself, wary of love, friendship, or even advancement in his career. He becomes fascinated by the teachings of a writer, also an outcast, but one who has openly admitted what he is and is devoting his life to obtaining social justice for his people. Dying of tuberculosis, the writer seeks a disciple to carry on his work, and the boy is faced with an agonising choice between his faith and his instinct for self-preservation.

What makes the film so distinctive is Ichikawa's style, which lifts the film on to the same plane of brooding torment as Dostoevsky's novels. (The outcast novelist, doomed, intense, forever sweeping through dingy doorways or along snowy streets in a billowing black cape, is a particularly Dostoevskian character.) It begins superbly, with a bull and a man isolated on a lonely hillside plain, face to face for the few split seconds before the bull charges and the man dies. There is an elemental ferocity and terror in this sequence—like Ahab confronting the White Whale—which the film never recap-

"PUNISHMENT ROOM".





ECHOES OF DOSTOIEVSKY: WRITER AND STUDENT IN "THE SIN".

tures, although Ichikawa makes striking use of a habit (indulged elsewhere, notably in *Bonchi*) of linking violently emotional scenes by a calming, Ozu-like shot of an empty street or landscape. The slaughterhouse sequence, for instance, with its rapid butchering of the bull in a few flash shots that hit like a sledgehammer, is followed by tranquil images of the lake and village, before proceeding with the scene where the boy returns home after seeing his dead father's body and is shocked to find the richest man in the village being hounded down as an outcast.

By such devices, Ichikawa keeps so tight a grip on his narrative that it never sags until the boy reaches the point of no return, and must discover himself or be discovered. In a protracted tearful sequence, he confesses before the assembled children in his class, and it isn't long before everybody in the room is weeping in an agony of pity, remorse and despair. Someone once remarked of Hemingway that, like all tough men, he leaned so far over backwards to avoid sentimentality that he fell head over heels right into it. Exactly the same is true of Ichikawa when he drops his guard of mockery to become completely solemn; not only here, but in (for instance) the "Home Sweet Home" sequence of *The Burmese Harp*.

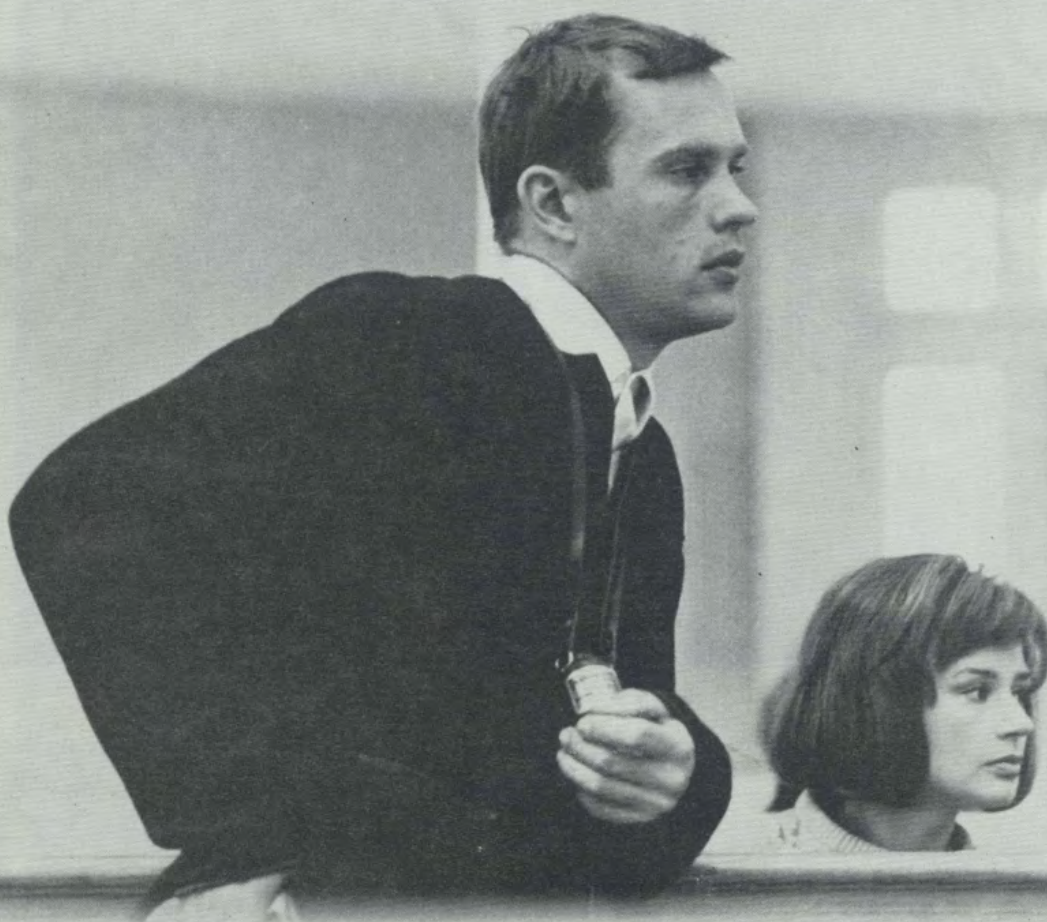
Perhaps, though, it is simply a question of finding the right material; for his earlier *The Heart* (1955), another Dostoevsky subject of brooding torment, manages very successfully to avoid the trap of sentimentality. This, reduced to its essentials, is simply the story of a man who, obsessed by a sense of guilt for the death of his closest friend, gradually withdraws further and further into himself until he finally commits suicide. The story of his past betrayal, which he dredges up for the benefit of a sympathetic young student who befriends him, is trite enough. He and his friend had fallen in love with the same girl. Taking advantage of the fact that the friend had professed to be spiritually above such matters of the flesh, he had stolen a march on him; and the friend had killed himself. But this story, one feels, is only an excuse, something on which the

hero can focus his profound sense of futility as he meditates his own death and the inability to understand of his wife and young friend. (In its systematic use of lingering close-ups, *The Heart* is almost a scientific dissection of three minds.) There is a haunting scene in which the hero, thinking himself alone on the beach, swims steadily out to sea until the young student, who is watching, anxiously follows him; when he catches up, neither of them speaks, and suddenly they both stare up at the empty sky. If the film were not set in the years just before the First World War, one would be tempted to suggest that there hangs over it that shadow of nuclear destruction which is never far from Ichikawa's work. As it is, all the various strands of the film lead to the same point—the extinction of life: the hero is alive only in his past before his friend died; his love for his wife is dead; he chooses to reveal his story to the young student precisely at the moment when the latter is attending his sick father on his deathbed; and for his own end he chooses the exact moment when the death of the Emperor closes the Meiji era.

Unlike the young outcast's tearful confession in *The Sin*, which is sentimental because too great weight is attached to it, the moment of confession here is not important in itself, but only in that it is a key to a lock: it helps to account for certain gaps in our knowledge of the nature of the hero's despair. Also unlike *The Sin*, one can detect in *The Heart*, almost concealed behind Ichikawa's sympathetic involvement, a touch of characteristic mockery. Despite his obsession with death, life goes on in the hero's household. Flowers are fussily watered; burglars are laid in wait for; the maid has to be taken to the dentist with a bad tooth; and when he invites the student for a drink in a café, he departs with a lavish "I'll pay," but leaves the student sadly contemplating an empty bottle. Underlying this beautifully modulated film, there is the hint of a suggestion that the hero is playing his own death like a chess game, carefully manipulating the pieces until he mates himself. And like most Ichikawa games, it ends in tragedy.

after three films

JÖRN DONNER



JORN DONNER, HARRIET ANDERSSON.

I AM ALMOST SCARED when I see the blank pages. It's not that I'm afraid of starting work. My experience of films has given me a fear of words. Words, which used to be my friends! Since the age of nine I've been writing almost every day, until I began making films. The habit of thinking in letters has gone. Drafts of stories tend to resemble drafts of screenplays. Books are not books to read, only material for films. Everything I say seems dubious. It's a symptom of poisoning.

For the last three years I've spent nearly all my time on film work. I've made one documentary and three feature films, seen them through from shooting script to completion. My story is about an author and journalist who, partly by luck, got the chance of telling a story through the medium of film. While many of my colleagues in Europe and elsewhere were trying in vain to realise their intentions, I have been working in the relative security and indolence of the Swedish social state.

In order to teach myself and to some extent others, I want to tell a story, as simply and clearly as possible.

The First Showing

The moment when the first finished copy of a film is shown is final and often very depressing. Hopes of all kinds have been placed on this work. In a moment of truth I see what could

have been done better. My sight is not free and open. I know each shot and sequence by heart. I know how they came to be made and what happened outside the shot. A slice of my life passes by.

With me in the cinema are some of my colleagues: the editor, the sound engineer, the laboratory's lighting technician and manager, a few more. Among them men from the company's distribution and publicity departments. After the showing I can tell from their faces that this is a film no one wants to see, they least of all. Their hopes are dashed already. A week or two later their feelings find a practical outlet when they order only a few prints of the film: this film they have already condemned.

Afterwards, officious people come up and say things I don't want to hear. That I've brought off a splendid reportage. That the photography was beautiful. Somebody wonders what the cinemagoers will think. At such moments all I want is to walk out and disappear. Like everyone else, I am pleased by success and depressed by failure. But I have been attacked and criticised ever since 1951. I was eighteen then, sensitive and more easily hurt. I am upset less by harsh criticism than by people who refuse to give an opinion of their own.

When the first showing is over you might think that my work on the film is finished. Unfortunately this is not so. A film never leaves me in peace until I have started the next.

I have been exerting myself for too long, my involvement has been too subjective and exacting.

Milestones

I'm struck by how persistently and often I have taken myself seriously, even at the age of nine when I wrote poems and novels, or my own handwritten newspapers. Words were a cure for loneliness. The very profusion of words made me happy. I seldom thought in pictures, always in letters. I couldn't draw, and still can't. The seriousness that has always been with me has made my stories heavy. I lack wit and therefore dream of being able to make comedies. But I know that comedies are the most serious undertakings of all.

It took nearly twenty years of daily writing before the words did more or less what I wanted. I was a patriotic romantic and nationalist, dreaming of other people's heroic deeds. Then came the revelation of Marxism and work. I went on writing until I dug my way down to things and the simple yet difficult contemplation of them. I learnt to be matter-of-fact by looking at Europe, during travels which diluted my ideological prejudices. When I joined the political left I took much for granted. By degrees I learnt to doubt nearly everything. Slowly but violently I swung round, convinced then, as now, that I was always right.

In 1954 I began making documentaries, having been a film critic since 1951. I directed, edited, and was sometimes my own producer. The maximum amount of raw film I could use for a 600-foot film was 1,500 feet. I told about Helsinki on a summer morning. One film was about floods. It was called *Water*. I went on dreaming about feature films. One of my most usual nightmares was that a producer had given me *carte blanche* to carry out my intentions and I made a film which was an awful flop. Then I woke up.

On several occasions I had the chance of learning film work from the bottom. In 1953 I thought of trying to get into the Centro Sperimentale in Rome. Then I invited Joris Ivens to Helsinki. He promised me a job at DEFA in East Berlin. We drank whisky and I dreamt of the future. My dream of films recurred at regular intervals, never fading away entirely but getting steadily fainter. I was more and more an author and even began to make a name for myself.

One moment I was thought to be a communist, at another I was called an anti-communist. All this vacillation, other critics' doubt as to what I 'really' was, gradually hardened me to criticism. Later, when the films were said to have failed, I was not unduly upset. As I had been a critic myself I knew that stupidity was not a privilege reserved for the chosen few.

The Soil that is Finland

Living conditions in Finland are 10-20 years behind development in Sweden and progress is more erratic. Puritanism and hypocrisy thrive, but so does a bold pioneering spirit. I get on better in Finland than in Sweden, because fewer people have a one-track mind in regard to their jobs. Finland is smaller, cosier, poorer. In short, Finland is my native land.

Professor Ilmari Hustich recently raised the question of whether Sweden was too big for her neighbours in the North. Mentally, at least this seems to be the case. I have never understood why people have wanted to appropriate my films as Swedish, just because they have been financed by Swedish companies. I readily admit that I could never have made feature films with Finnish capital. I have Swedish production and its continuity to thank for the chance of being able to work. But a debt of gratitude doesn't mean that the question of my films' 'Swedishness' should not be answered. For what they are worth, I have made personal films. But Swedish films? No. There is no point in hiding one's roots. My roots are in a middle-class academic Swedish-Finnish world, whose way of thinking I have broken with. Even in my hatred of Finland I remain a Finn.

The Soil that is Sweden

I started work on a book about Ingmar Bergman and was a film critic. Lived in a damp, cold annex to Rosendal Manor at Djurgården in Stockholm and did nothing but write. Once

or twice I met Bergman. During these conversations I came into superficial contact with the Swedish film world. Within the space of a year, from the completion of the Bergman book until I had made the documentary *Testimonies of Her*, I had the opportunity of listening to Bergman's arguments. He developed an astonishing vitality, but no doubt thought I was a poor listener. His enormous charm was able to hide even the most superb platitudes. He was full of big plans for the future. At Svensk Filmindustri he was going to form an "artists' collective", in which a group of directors (including me, of course) were to carry Swedish films forward. It was only a matter of time before all the film-makers of any note in Sweden would work for this company.

Bergman also managed to tell me about his own film theories. I found that he knew nearly everything about films. He spoke of what he has often written: the function of close-ups, the actors' faces. As I listened I was quite convinced, being fascinated by Bergman the personality.

Since August 1962, when I handed in the manuscript of a book on the Danube countries, I have been able to write only for films. In quantity, a meagre production: one documentary, three feature films. The unfinished books have remained unfinished. It's absurd, really, when words are just what you need in many phases of film work. But spoken words, not written ones. Bergman encouraged me to start writing for films. Two other factors also brought my dreams about films nearer: I was writing criticism in *Dagens Nyheter*, and my book about Bergman made me form personal opinions.

One of the things I wrote was a short story, which in 1963 became the last part of my first feature film *A Sunday in September*. The story contained the central idea for the entire film. A woman goes to see her ex-husband in order to find out their feelings for each other, or lack of feelings. Bergman was very keen on the story. He was also willing to consider a feature film with the sections not yet written. He thought I should first film the short story. But other people put in their oar. I had also written a sketch about a jazz singer the night after her appearance in an amusement park. Svensk Filmindustri wanted to try out the new name Monica Zetterlund. As I wanted to film at almost any price I agreed to write a script based on this sketch. Shooting was fixed for the late autumn of 1962. I was promised that the matter of the story with the woman would be taken up later. The important thing for me was to work at all. Everyone was very kind.

Testimonies of Her

I travelled about to several amusement parks to study Monica Zetterlund and the life around her. At the outset I half realised what I ought to do and what would be the film's weakness. Instead of using a fictional idea which was not feasible I should have planned a documentary around Monica. I was scared, Monica was tired, and nobody, myself least of all, grasped what I wanted to do. No doubt I started shooting with too much seriousness and too little know-how. On the other hand, I don't think that someone like myself can learn other than through work and practical experience. In my eyes the studio was something mysterious and holy. It was the oldest studio at Filmstaden, having at one time had glass walls and a glass roof. It was chilly and anything but sound-proof. I haven't been inside it since then—November 1962.

In retrospect, *Testimonies of Her* does not seem a complete flop. When this half-hour film was shown in March 1963 the critics were favourably expectant. I had wanted to make a kind of collage, but hadn't managed to carry my principles into effect. My biggest mistake lay on another plane. The artistic direction at Svensk Filmindustri then consisted of Ingmar Bergman, Allan Ekelund and Kenne Fant. Bergman and Fant in particular openly expressed their disappointment with my work. They thought I had merely illustrated my scanty script.

At that time the screenplay of *Farewell, Goodbye* (the original title of *A Sunday in September*, of which more later) was almost finished, and delivered to Svensk Filmindustri. The artistic directors' opinions of *Testimonies of Her* interested me less than an answer to my query as to whether I might make *Farewell, Goodbye*. As I was simultaneously negotiating

with Europa Film, Bergman considered me a blackmailer. I answered back. Bergman complained that I had not come to him of a morning for artistic advice. Other young directors had done so. That was the end of my dealings with Bergman and Svensk Filmindustri. I had not asked to be a pupil at Bergman's film school. He had misunderstood me. Since then we have met amicably.

The story of my dispute with Bergman later appeared in *SIGHT AND SOUND*, in which I was pictured as a miracle of courage. I wasn't at all—I had the possibility of making a film elsewhere. All the same, I was not willing to subordinate myself, to listen to words of advice which in fact were ill-concealed commands. Freedom to make my own mistakes means a lot to me.

TOP: ZBIGNIEW CYBULSKI AND HARRIET ANDERSSON IN "TO LOVE".
BELOW: THOMMY BERGGREN, HARRIET ANDERSSON IN "A SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER".



The Camera's Morality

Youth is the age of manifestos, Bergman seems to say in an article. Since 1962 I have followed a sparse but fairly clear aesthetic. It could be expressed like this:

A film is change of perspective, the outer and the inner. The camera should change position or optical train. The change should arouse curiosity.

A film is an artefact. Complete identification with reality should be avoided. The critical (epic) distance should be preserved. We do not re-create with the intention of imitating.

I should avoid psychoanalysing. A film should show actions. Don't explain everything. Tell a story.

The distance between me (the camera) and the actors expresses a moral-aesthetic attitude to reality. My sphere of action is space relationships. How often while editing I have come upon mistakes I have made: the camera has been too close or too far away.

Mistrust everything and everybody. Undermine the patterns of habit of those who are professionally taught. Shun the hideous provincialism of amateurs. Don't cheat yourself and the audience with eye-delighting tricks.

Freedom

My three feature films have on the whole been made without external pressure. But I should like to say something about the nature of the pressure that was brought to bear.

Gunnar Oldin and Europa Film thought that the title *Farewell, Goodbye* had no sales value. After long discussions I suggested *A Sunday in September*. Whether this title helped to sell the film better or not, I do not know. It proved impossible to shoot the film's summer scenes in the summer. Summer became spring, and the romantic story at the beginning therefore went awry. The film originally lasted over two hours. I had to make big cuts even at the editing stage. The print shown later was still shorter. Reluctantly I passed these cuts too. They were made directly in the optical print and were therefore rather haphazard.

The next film, *After the Funeral*, was not allowed its proper name either. The expressive original title was changed to the meaningless *To Love*. Moreover, at the script stage Rune Waldekranz, who was in charge of production at Sandrews, wanted the film to have a climax. I altered one or two things, but nothing essential.

Mario Soldati maintained that the film *To Love* was too long, that as a 60-minute story it could have been a masterpiece. That brings us to the most serious curtailment of freedom that conventional film production automatically involves. Under the commercial distribution machinery films should preferably have a length of 90 to 110 minutes; nothing else is tolerated. *To Love* was a short story, and of course should not have exceeded the short story's size. It is ridiculous to expect an author and director to know in advance how long his film is going to be. But it is naïve to think that the writer of a film has the same absolute freedom as the author of a novel.

My third feature film was originally called *Roots*, but I changed the title myself to *Adventure Starts Here*. Not only had Wesker written a play of the same name, but the emphasis was shifted while the script was being written. The roots, the origin of the man in the story, were only one of the themes in this film. But *Adventure Starts Here* was made without external pressure, except in one respect.

From the outset I have been aware that a feature film must not cost more than a certain amount. As a writer I was not read very much. As a film director I have not been popular. I have gladly paid the price of my freedom—my films have been made quickly, and I have saved wherever possible. *Adventure Starts Here*, for instance, was a very complicated film, with cast and technicians from five countries, shooting in Berlin and Helsinki, cameras from Switzerland, clothes from Paris, and almost insuperable problems in the way of locations, since I refused to go into a studio. Yet the film cost no more than an ordinary Swedish production.

Admittedly, this lack of freedom over a budget can be

restrictive. Sometimes I envy those of my Swedish colleagues who apparently have a free hand with money. But the control I now have over the production as a whole has taught me a great deal. It has necessitated taking part in work that others regard as a sheer waste of time. That is one reason why *Adventure Starts Here* was so tiring. Almost every day from March until December 1965 I worked on the film, and all the same the script had been ready since November 1964.

The good thing about this form of slavery is that my present producer has left me to work in peace. Sometimes he too has found that certain items of expenditure may have been unjustified, but he is not insensitive to argument. As regards me, he has followed the principle of either letting me work and having confidence in me, or having nothing to do with me. Nor has he behaved with that exaggerated sense of his own knowledge of filming that has characterised most of the producers I've had to do with. Only those who have made films with their own hands (literally) can know what films are.

A Sunday in September

Why was the script of *Farewell, Goodbye* made into a film? The details of the matter are perhaps instructive.

By 1962 the effects of the subsequently extended backing system for Swedish films were beginning to make themselves felt. The companies were looking for new names. Year by year the support of the public had been dwindling. The old formulas for success were no longer valid. Without Harry Schein's Film Institute as possible support in the background, Europa Film would never have produced the film.

Since the autumn of 1962 I had been living with Harriet Andersson. She was under contract to Svensk Filmindustri but had the right to take films with other companies. Europa made it a condition for the film that she was interested in playing Birgitta. Without her assistance it would never have been made.

Gunnar Oldin came as producer to Europa Film. We later fell out, but *Farewell, Goodbye* was a project which he carried through. In fact, I think it was the only production in which he took an active part. He was at the showing of the film in Venice in August 1963, and I could see from his disappointment when told of the Swedish notices that he regarded the unfavourable criticisms as personal insults.

I was very pleased that Europa Film allowed me to engage artists whom I admired, notably the set designer Erik Aaes from Copenhagen, from whom I have learnt much. But also Bo Nilsson, who wrote his first and best film music. When we have worked together he has always composed the music before so much as one foot of film has been shot.

Long before I saw Godard's *Vivre sa Vie* in London in the autumn of 1962 I had had the idea of dividing the film up into chapters. But unfortunately one is usually regarded as a disciple when one comes after others. The division of the film into chapters served the purpose of making the action less dramatic—the audience knew in advance what was going to happen. I also knew that this would affect their interest. But in the matter of the audience's interest I don't think one should underestimate the pressure groups that make it almost impossible to try to make films in a new way.

The big film companies' cinema managers and heads of distribution have greater influence than the critics and advance publicity. Swedish film production is not a natural phenomenon, but has grown up as an appendage to the cinema business: the public have wanted Swedish films. So production is still the slave of distribution, the cinemas. The remarks made by these old hands in "the trade" are quite unbelievable. They soon forget their mistakes and remember only their true prophecies. Had it been up to them, Ingmar Bergman would never have made one foot of film.

Criticism and Success

Not all the notices for *A Sunday in September* were bad. But one or two influential critics rejected it utterly. I am naïve enough to admit how pleased I was about the *opera prima* prize in Venice, which was awarded a week after the première.



"ADVENTURE STARTS HERE": HARRIET ANDERSSON.

As journalist and author I had had no success to speak of. Unlike many others much more talented than I am, I have had *Sitzfleisch*—in other words, perseverance.

Now came the prize. At Europa Film they had evidently not been enraptured by the film, since no one approached me about any new projects. With a clear conscience, therefore, I could say I was free when Rune Waldekranz got in touch with me in the summer about a contract for two films. I can guess how horrified the Sandrews directors were when they found whom they had made an agreement with.

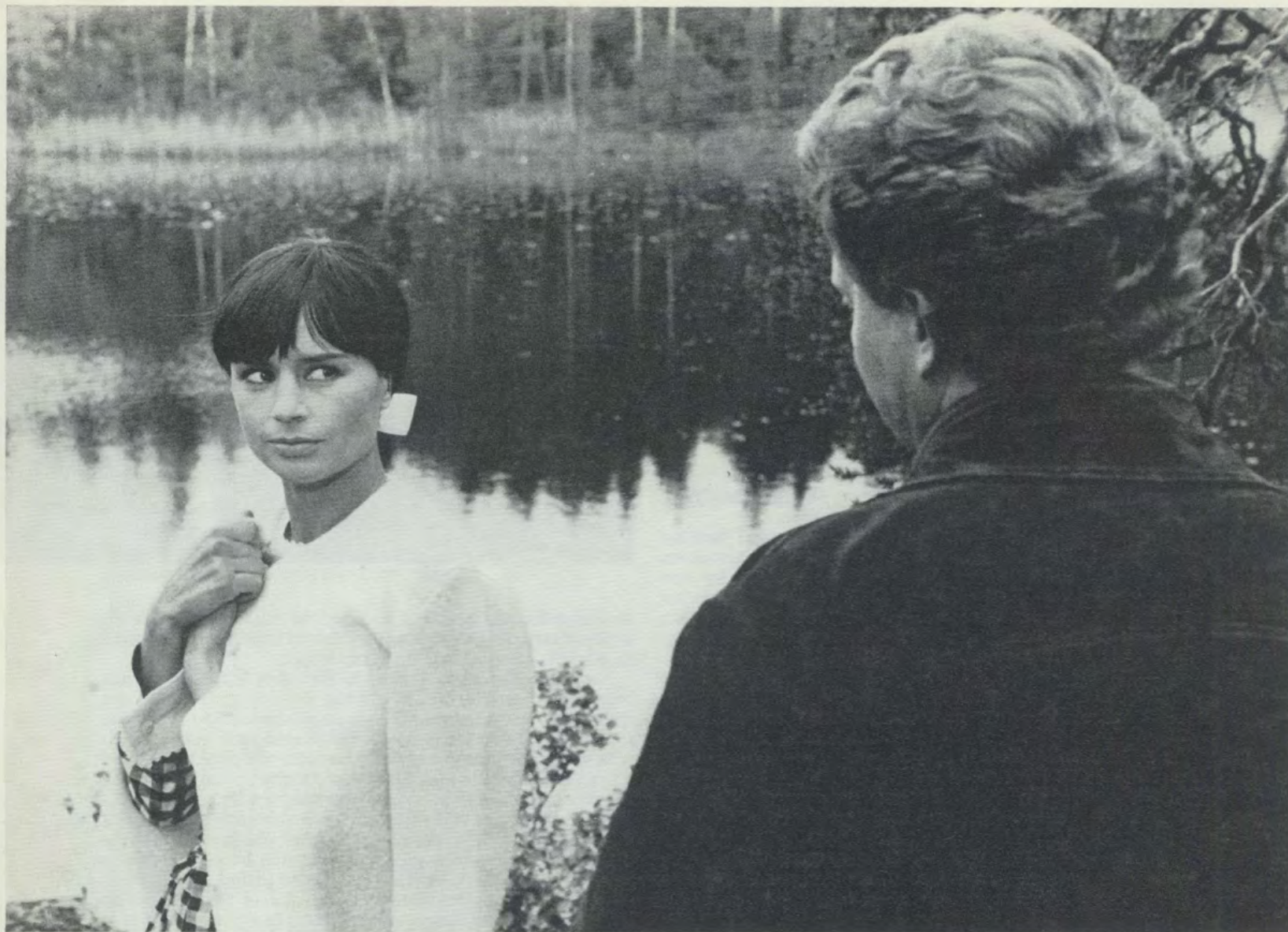
The criticism of *A Sunday in September* gave me food for thought. Had I done right? One thing I did know—that the film could not be torn out of its context. From rhetoric in prose I had sought objectivity; I had tried to find my way from outward to inner description. *A Sunday in September* was inner analysis, introversive objectivity. In many places it is told in an almost amateur way. On the other hand, the film is much more genuine than the next one, *To Love*. The shots have a convincing truth. I worked with a young cameraman, Tony Forsberg, who grasped at once what I wanted. My later cameramen, Sven Nykvist and Jean Badal, have been more famous, finished artists.

While still working on *A Sunday in September* I made an observation about work on a feature film which has held good since. Each one of those taking part in the work, even those who are most important, strives to defend his own interests, even when these may be detrimental to the whole. The power that holds them all together is the director. That is not to say that I refuse to admit what the others do. Let me put it this way: the director is at the mercy of his actors, the cameraman, and many others. But without the director not even these can flower.

Looking back, I think that a great deal of the uncertainty with *A Sunday in September* was due to the fact that this film was new of its kind, at any rate in the North. Outside the North it was received on the whole with goodwill but no surprise. My cinematographic training is not Nordic, even if much of the coldness in what I relate stems from Nordic conditions. A unique feature of Swedish films is that a few people have been able to view reality with the eyes of a stranger. One of these was Mauritz Stiller. That is why I dedicated *To Love* to him.

Dedication

Disputes have raged about literary quotations in films. There is a touch of pretentiousness when in *Vivre sa Vie* Godard lets his own voice read Edgar Allan Poe, or when other French directors drown their films in allusions. Much of



HARRIET ANDERSSON IN "ROOFTREE".

this may be a form of snobbery. I began *A Sunday in September* with something I wrote only during the editing: "Every feeling has its own truth."

In *To Love* Harriet Andersson read the excerpt from my book *In a Hospital* that had given me the idea for the film. But by an unfortunate chance the book's cover was visible. Otherwise no one would have noticed what it was about.

Adventure Starts Here is dedicated to Harriet. Had it not been for her, I should perhaps not have made my first film, perhaps not the second, perhaps not the third. Many people have been indignant about this joint work; behind my back it has been said, audibly enough, that my films really contain only one worthwhile element—her acting. I don't share this view. For one thing, I do not believe that good acting is created in an absolute void. For another, I think anyone would have to be blind and deaf to miss the theme running through the three feature films I have made. I have tried to analyse a moment of emotional truth and crisis in the lives of the characters.

Absorbed by Films

My life has changed. The second film came about as a result of the first, and when the second was finished I had already been working for a long time on the third. Sivar Arnér's novel *RoofTree*, which I reviewed in *Dagens Nyheter*, appeared in the autumn of 1963. The film rights were bought by Sandrews at my suggestion. I began shooting this film in June 1966.

Films have become a way of life, for what it is worth. Films have given me worry, a lot of travelling and bad nerves.

Films have taken me to many places, but also to despair. I was not prepared for the psychological conflicts which can arise during work. I was not prepared for the fact that the director must be able to handle so many types of people. I have dreamt of doing something which is whole, my own and yet tenacious enough to live without me. A medium in which I express myself without restrictions. Perhaps films can be this medium when I have learnt more. Sometimes, however, I am ashamed that visions as subjective as mine have become a film, when there are much more important things to tell of. And of course there is much I regret. Seeing one's own films again after a time can be torment. I realise that a lot of things could have been changed or done better. Other people's critical remarks have not gone entirely unheeded. The first two feature films were branded as monotonous and one-sided. The visual expression, in the second film at least, had been neglected. So in *Adventure Starts Here* I sought a more extensive visual scale of expression.

This change also has its simple and natural causes. *A Sunday in September* was originally a story set in Helsinki. Gestures and dialogue were Swedish-Finnish. So was the atmosphere. *To Love*, on the other hand, was a story that could have taken place anywhere. But I've found it hard to show what I wanted, since my unfamiliarity with Swedish people and the Swedish environment is total.

Adventure Starts Here was created as a story in Helsinki. During the final work on *To Love* I was often thinking of a bare idea which resembles the last part of *A Sunday in September*. A woman comes to Helsinki in the belief that the landscape will make up her mind for her. She has got it into

her head that the external change will automatically change her inner world. When I finished writing the script I was in Helsinki with its autumn air, in my flat overlooking the water and the seasons. I penetrated into the past in a way that I did not understand while I was working. Places I had known as a boy became scenes of action, peopled with a different life. Geographically the emotional conflict came to be enacted where my youth had been spent. While I was writing I thought I was creating a slice of total fiction. Such was the starting point, but the result turned out otherwise.

Yet I managed to avoid the monotony that threatened. I could move about freely in this setting, since it was my own. But while I wrote, the fear seized me that this story could not be communicated to anyone else. Outwardly it is about very little. It is about meetings and partings, to use my own publicity phrase. During shooting I noticed almost every day what heavy going it was to try to explain, with the help of reason and logic, something which had been born of shadowy impulses. The film was meant to move about freely from place to place, in time and space and words. Most of those around me felt an uncertainty about this: they were not taking part in an ordinary film with beginning and end. They grasped the details, but missed my intention. Perhaps I missed it myself. I went the whole hog.

During production five languages were spoken, but chiefly three—Finnish, Swedish, French. As I was one of the few who knew these languages, some of my time was occupied in clearing up misunderstandings. I don't think I should find life so exciting and varied if I did not have this constant contact with other people's habits and views. I am presumptuous enough to say that in no time at all I could make an ordinary Swedish film of the old kind. But engaging foreign actors and technicians has other reasons than the need of brushing up my languages.

There is a danger of isolation and provincialism in Swedish film production. For over forty years work has gone on at Solna in the same studios under relatively protected but also rather uninspiring forms. The cameramen have slowly been trained in the Swedish school; in the same way other skilled film work has been practically handed down from father to son. This has given assurance but also complacency and indolence.

Teachers

I must admit that in the sphere where I have felt most unsure—the visual expression for a mood or feeling, the right picture and the right movement in the picture—Swedish films have almost nothing to teach me. The first famous period of Swedish films had its spiritual foundation in a literary tradition whose greatest name was Selma Lagerlöf. The literary tradition as a basis for films has been maintained all the time until now, when a suspicion of a change is noticeable. But those who have really told their story in pictures have all been in other parts of the world. Stiller was a brilliant craftsman of the *mise-en-scène*. Bergman has indirectly taught me much, through his perseverance and consistency. Widerberg and Sjöman, too, have convinced me of their honesty and intent, but not that I ought to take lessons from them.

My teachers are elsewhere. With a slight exaggeration I can say that the cutting table has been my chief teacher. I edited the documentaries in a painfully slow process, using an old-fashioned moviola, in which the image in projection was minute. In Sweden I have worked with the foremost editors, sitting with them for days, weeks and months. The transformation of the material from something shapeless into a film is the same horribly fascinating process every time. But it is very time-consuming. I have often toyed with the idea of doing the editing myself, i.e. the actual cutting. Perhaps one day I shall, but it is in other phases of the finishing work that I find I still have a lot to learn—for example, in the matter of sound. I became aware of this during the last two feature films, both of which have been entirely post-synchronised. This method of working can give a new freedom to the style of narration. One is freed from the absolute slavery of the synchronised scene.

Future

By the end of 1966 I shall have made four feature films, the last of which is based on material not my own. During the same space of time other directors have managed to get a dozen pieces of work done. It is not a very encouraging thought, since I too live only once and know that the years up to the age of 45 are the only time when you can create something new, if you can at all.

I do not consider that at the moment of making my films I could have made them better than I did. I am quite sure that *Adventure Starts Here* is my best film to date. I suppose this means that I am developing, however slowly. Only the future can answer the question as to whether I should and may go on with films or not. As for themes, I am bound by painful restrictions. Political films I don't think the Swedes would allow me to make. Many other things dear to my heart are out of the question as material. Yet many possibilities are left, now that I am at last getting rid of the feeling of having been a captive under films.

My own picture of my own films is undergoing constant change. A popular and very common modern aestheticism has abolished all objective values in art and given way to a subjectivism which is imposing. As regards my own work, I know that there it is, full of faults and lapses, but also with certain palpable merits. If it is really so that all laws have been set aside, then my views as a creator are as valid as those of other people. So why should I listen to all supercilious, indulgent, smiling, ingratiating, critical, cocky, touchy, vain, arrogant, wise, sweet or sour utterances? I have no faith, but I do believe I'm alive.

Translation by Alan Blair.



DONNER AT WORK ON "ROOFTREE".

FILM REVIEWS

LA GUERRE EST FINIE

LITTLE BY LITTLE, almost imperceptibly, a personality emerges. Alain Resnais, reputed never to write a line of his scripts, instead worries, shapes and chisels them into something that, with each successive film, is more and more his, less and less the product of a collaboration; and with *La Guerre est Finie* (Gala), it is as though some timid night creature had finally emerged from its lair, still a little wary perhaps, but ready to be recognised as an ordinary mortal, amused, tender and capricious, rather than the remote intellectual paragon born of Duras, Robbe-Grillet and (much less) Cayrol.

There is a new note here, of a man oppressed more by hard reality than by the elusive promptings of memory, as Diego, the middle-aged Spanish political exile living in France, finds himself driven remorselessly back to Spain and almost certain arrest. Where *Muriel* was a film of muted tones designed to convey the subtle interaction of past and present, with its cut corners and overlapping dialogue taking a route almost as circular as memory itself, *La Guerre est Finie* drives straight forward, altogether harder and more sharply cut, and with Diego's premonitory flashes—a train missed, an arrest, a death—lending an urgent edge of fear.

This is not to say that time and memory are unimportant. On the contrary. Diego (Yves Montand) is a man between two worlds in more ways than one: between Spain and France, between youth and age, between the old Spain of the International Brigade and the new one of tourist paradises, between his settled love for Marianne and his yearning for the uncomplicated youth of Nadine. But where Resnais' earlier films might be summarised as a reconciliation of past and present in the mind, here the reconciliation is purely physical. Diego—who has just had a clash with the frontier police which suggests he is a marked man, and is now being asked to return to Spain to warn a friend, Juan, who may be in danger—is a man trapped between his past as an ardent supporter of the cause of Spanish freedom, and his future of almost certain imprisonment if he continues. Does either past or future warrant his adherence to a cause in which he has begun to lose faith?

Diego's answer is no, and Resnais proceeds to a brilliant dissection of the impossibility of his choice.

On the one hand, there is his new-found love for Nadine (Geneviève Bujold), the pretty young student whom he meets, almost accidentally, after borrowing her father's passport for an illicit trip to Spain. Diego himself recognises the impossibility of a love which begins with her discovery of his likeness to her father, and ends in her naïve, cloak-and-dagger enthusiasm for his status as a professional revolutionary (as well as the intractable, terrorist ardour of the student political group to which she belongs). Resnais—in a sequence borrowed, beautifully, justifiably, and with full acknowledgment from *Une Femme Mariée*—shows their love-making with all the purity and passion of a dream, fragmented limbs bleached out white on dazzling white. Like his vision of a new Spain, Diego's new love is a doomed attempt to recapture an ideal.

On the other hand there is Marianne (Ingrid Thulin), the woman with whom he has lived for seven years, and to whom he returns after leaving Nadine's apartment. Their love-making is shot (and scored) quite differently, in such a way as to evoke echoes of the earlier scene, but this time revealing the passion without the purity, the reality and not the dream. Marianne, with her love for Diego, her desire for a child by him, her awareness of what his job involves, her acceptance of his fear, can be a haven in the present, sheltering him from both past and future. But at the very moment when he telephones her to say that he has been excused by the group, and that someone else will go to Barcelona to warn Juan—"Je ne pars plus, je reste avec toi longtemps, pour toujours peut-être"—he is assailed by the betrayals implied in his words, in a haunting series of flash images of Nadine, Juan, and Carmen (the grieving woman to whom he had earlier brought news of her husband's arrest).

Earlier on, Diego has almost absent-mindedly answered "L'Espagne me manquerait" when Marianne asks him if he would really mind if his work became too

dangerous and he was forced to give it up to stay in France. Now he realises that for him the words are no empty formula: he cannot just give up. Accident takes a hand when his replacement dies of a heart attack and he is forced to go after all; and Resnais' extraordinary achievement in the final sequences of the film is to suggest, whether Diego succeeds or fails in his mission, a complete reconciliation within himself, of past, present and future, fears conquered and ideals regained.

Put like that it may sound trite, but in fact it is done with exquisite, elliptical tact through Diego's identification with Ramon, the dead man who was looking forward with the excitement of a child to his first sight of Spain. Imagining Ramon's funeral in Paris, Diego receives an intimation of his own death (flash shot of a cemetery standing dreamlike on the edge of the sea): "C'est l'ombre de Ramon qui est entré dans sa vie." In a sense reborn, he will see Spain anew through Ramon's eyes, as if for the first time. And as he sets off towards his unknown future, both his past (now regained) and his future come to his aid: it is Nadine who telephones the group with the information that the Spanish police are waiting for him, and Marianne who volunteers to fly to Barcelona to try to warn him. The last shot is of superimposed images of Diego and Marianne, in which Diego slowly dissolves to leave—perhaps physically as well as spiritually—Marianne to take his place.

Using much the same sort of dazzlingly exact mosaic technique as *Muriel*, *La Guerre est Finie* is rather easier to absorb: not so much, I think, because it is any less dense or has a stronger narrative line, as because we are now growing acquainted with the workings of Resnais' mind. Here again, alongside the new note of hard reality, are the sudden thriller intimations, the exhilarating time jumps (mainly forward, this time), the same irresistibly unexpected humour, the same feeling that time moves in loops, returning with an enriched meaning. (A particularly fine example is Diego's grateful reference to how Nadine's presence

"LA GUERRE EST FINIE": GENEVIEVE BUJOLD.



of mind on the telephone saved him at the frontier post; later, after he has met and fallen in love with her, his words recur with quite another resonance: "Une toute petite étoile, une étoile de mer pour toutes les circonstances.")

The rhythms of the film are brilliantly harnessed to the moods of a man in transition: at the beginning, harsh and nervous as Diego waits at the frontier post, punctuated with imagined hopes and fears, of police arrests, missed connections, unknown friends on whom his fate depends; after the tension, the relaxation of his meeting with Nadine; tension screwing up again with his return to Marianne, his irritation at her mundane friends, his meeting with the young *plastiqueurs*, his fears that Nadine is being watched by the police; and finally, the calmer, quieter acceptance of the ending. And, running like an almost subliminal motif through the film, evoking Diego's description of the secret agent's life as an endless wait outside strange doors, never knowing who will answer or what is happening, there are the doors: imagined doors with imagined numbers; real doors with real police waiting patiently outside; doors behind which a grieving woman hovers fearfully for the news she already knows, or a stranger cheerfully answers that she has never heard of Madame Lopez. Diego's imagination ranges from the absurd (the delicious shot in which he imagines Marianne's cheeky friend peeking inquisitively over the edge of the bed to rummage in his suitcase of plastic explosives) to the sublime (his identification with the dead Ramon); but it is these doors, haunting and hovering, which are the key to his predicament as a man between two worlds.

TOM MILNE

THE CHASE

AT THE END OF Arthur Penn's *The Chase* (BLC/Columbia) there is a scene in which an ordinary citizen of a small town in Texas shoots down at point-blank range and in full view of assembled onlookers a prisoner, a murder suspect, brought in by the local sheriff. Any resemblance between this scene and actual events is not coincidental. Arthur Penn's latest film is a comprehensive indictment of the contemporary American disease, and Lillian Hellman's screenplay (adapted from a novel and play by Horton Foote) never shrinks from topical allusion.

But if the allusion to the shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald is a little too gratuitously allegorical, much of the rest is only recognition of what *Time* magazine recently labelled a "gun toting nation". The setting is Texas, a small town somewhere near Houston on one summer night. There is menace in the air: a dental suppliers convention drives into town in a caravan of enormous cars; the bank, managed by Val Rogers, the community baron, is closing for the week; Rogers himself is preparing for his sixtieth birthday celebration, while those who are not invited to his party make arrangements for one of their own. Then, almost imperceptibly at first, news filters through that Bubber Reeves, the town's bad boy, the community scapegoat, has escaped from the State prison. By the end of the evening Bubber is dead, and Sheriff Calder (Marlon Brando), his disillusion complete, is ready to leave.

The combined talents of Brando (in his *One-Eyed Jacks* vein) and Arthur Penn



"THE CHASE": MARLON BRANDO AND ROBERT REDFORD.

promise a surfeit of something. In this case it is a surfeit of violence, both physical and psychological; yet the opening of *The Chase* gives little indication of the Dante's Inferno that is to follow. Against a backdrop of filtered reds and blues two shadowy groups of figures, hunted and hunters, stalk across the screen, and as the final credits fade, we see a subjective shot of a road running before a car as the driver unsuspectingly pulls to a halt to investigate a 'body' by the side of the road.

An impressive opening, but it is not long before the film begins to strike the first of its many attitudes: two passing Negroes turn their eyes away from the white prison uniform—not for them to concern themselves with white men's business. Thereafter, as Penn intercuts between Bubber on the run and the town waiting for him, virtually every scene is loaded with meaning. And the trouble is that instead of arising naturally from the structure, the meaning is imposed on the film from outside. One by one we are introduced to the inhabitants of the town: Calder, the sheriff, something of an outsider, put in his job by Val Rogers; Edwin, one of the bank's vice-presidents, weak and indecisive, mocked at by his bored wife, Emily, who is having an affair with Damon, the other vice-president; Jake Rogers, Val's only son, struggling to free himself of his father's possessiveness by taking Bubber's wife Anna for weekends in a local motel; Briggs, the town's gossip and oracle, pacing round the streets like a Greek chorus commenting on the sins of the protagonist of the moment.

The film is built round a series of setpieces, with groups of characters standing in static poses exchanging meaty dialogue. And at the centre of the stage is Brando, in his best mumbling form, pitting himself *High Noon* style against the whole town. No accident that at Rogers' dinner-jacketed birthday celebration the waiters are all Negroes; no accident that when Calder interrupts the rival party, there is much play made on the preponderance of guns among the inhabitants of Texas. But if these scenes are

extravagant and theatrical, they are as nothing compared with the scenes that follow: a Negro, rescued from a blood-hungry mob and jailed by Calder for his own protection, is savagely beaten by Val Rogers for the information he has about the whereabouts of Bubber, while outside the cell the sheriff is sadistically attacked by three of the town's respectable citizens.

If the violence of this scene is gratuitous, in the next, when Brando emerges from the jailhouse, nose broken and blood streaming down his face, to confront the assembled citizens, and the camera dwells on close-up after close-up of their impassive faces, the gesture has become absurd, and one remembers that Losey in *The Dividing Line* did the same thing so much more effectively. After that the film runs precipitously out of control. The climactic sequence, as the whole town drives out to taunt Bubber in the car dump where he is trapped, and the teenagers hurl rockets among the car wrecks while their elders roll wheels of fire down the slopes until the place erupts in a holocaust of destruction, is little short of hysterical.

Hysterical, extravagant, preposterous, in the end more a symptom of the American disease than a diagnosis. Yet through all the Wagnerian excesses of the film, one can't help remembering the real events of this summer in Texas. It was, after all, not in a small-minded community but at the University of Texas that a one-time altar boy climbed a tower with an armoury of weapons and calmly picked off everyone in sight. Fiction, as ever, pales before fact; and in this context *The Chase*, for all that it is finally swamped in hysteria, might just be less preposterous than it looks on the surface. Within its own exorbitant framework, the film almost comes off, and not least because the actors (with the exception of James Fox, labouring unhappily with an extraordinary Texas drawl) give grandiose performances attuned to the high pitch of the direction. Apart from Brando, who provides less of a performance than a presence, Janice Rule (Emily) and Robert Duvall (Edwin) are the most theatrically

effective; equally good, in a more restrained key, are Robert Redford as Bubber and Angie Dickinson as Calder's wife.

As in *Mickey One* Penn lets his imagination run away with itself; but far better an imagination run wild than no imagination at all. If in the end the tail wags the dog, at least the dog has a bark, and that's quite something after all the pampered poodles of current Hollywood fashion.

DAVID WILSON

TORN CURTAIN

FOR PERHAPS HALF AN HOUR, it looks as though Hitchcock's fiftieth film is going to be satisfyingly more than a nostalgic celebration. No one is more completely master of the art of beginning a movie—trailing jokes, clues, allusions across the smooth surface of audience inattention, until the bait is snapped and curiosity most thoroughly hooked. And the opening of *Torn Curtain* (Rank), with Paul Newman as an American scientist about to defect (or pretend to) to East Germany, Julie Andrews as his game but flustered fiancée, and Hitchcock himself sitting four-square in a Copenhagen hotel lounge, gloomily dandling a large infant, is as alluring as it needs to be. The hotel mirrors reflect shifty transactions; watchful German eyes glint from behind spectacles; a book is collected from an extraordinary bookseller, and the scientist retreats with it to a lavatory to decode its message. Odd, one feels, that from the camera position the lavatory must be about three times standard size; odd, but hardly important.

It turns out, however, to be not such an irrelevant detail. From the time the action shifts to East Germany, it is on such small technical mysteries, sheer improbability, and the slowness that gives one time to notice such things, that the movie founders. From Hitchcock one would never expect anything like Mundt's secret police, or that rueful professionalism which is Le Carré's gift to the spy thriller. His men on the run are always amateurs, still mentally in the age of Hannay, and to even up the odds this implies a certain amateurishness in their pursuers.

Here, though, amateurishness looks almost simple-minded. When the scientist wants to contact an underground escape organisation, he simply takes a taxi from the centre of East Berlin to a remote farm, traces the organisation's identification symbol in the dusty ground—and no one bothers to rub it out. On the run, he manages to forget one of the simpler addresses in Germany (the Post Office, Friedrichstrasse) and so plunges into an expendable encounter with Lila Kedrova, whose overpowering sentimental-comic turn seems to have caught Hitchcock in two minds. Meanwhile, the secret police, though commanded with punctilious assurance by Hansjoerg Felmy, behave as though it might be cheating actually to arrest their suspect. And some over-pronounced contrasts between exteriors and interiors (the lighting cameraman is John F. Warren, not the ever-reliable Robert Burks), obtrusive process work, and some very odd sets, like the little blue-green hillock to which Newman retreats to confess all to Julie Andrews, do nothing to keep disbelief suspended.

If a film is working, these are details to be brushed aside. If it isn't they become symptoms of a general lethargy and dis-

array. What went wrong here, one might suspect, was something basic in the storyline. The credits, ominous and vertiginous, hint at a far less relaxed movie. Brian Moore's story glances at such questions as the sick fear at the moment of defection, or the position of the luckless fiancée, caught up in what looks to her like real treason. (One question it interestingly fails to raise is the morality of scientific cribbing, which is the whole purpose of the American's escapade.) But Hitchcock seems to have decided to take things rather lightly; and without a bit of edge or stiffening, the chase is just cat and mouse with a clawless cat.

Not, of course, that Hitchcock's own claws are quite sheathed. A pursuit through a museum is neatly turned, played entirely on the flat echo of footsteps on marble. The blackboard war of nerves between the two scientists takes on the tension of a speeded-up chess game. And there is that double-edged sequence (Hitchcock's favourite, one might suspect) in which he has said that he was trying to show how difficult it is to kill. Difficult, certainly; and as the German housewife gazes wildly round her kitchen for another bit of equipment—pudding basin, carving-knife, spade, gas stove—to use on her victim, also preposterous. The gruelling close-ups as the victim is slowly tugged towards the gas jets; the comfortingly fake tomato blood on his shirt; the laugh checked by authentic revulsion: the equivocation is as pronounced as it is characteristic. For the rest, some of the jokes are good, and the nostalgia is... nostalgic. Roll on Hitchcock's fifty-first.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?

EDWARD ALBEE'S PLAY was *par excellence* a play, an experience in a theatre. You went to it to be screamed at by the actors rather as you were screamed at by Jimmy Porter: it was as much a dialogue between actors and audience as between actor and actor. The thing was an emotional roller-

coaster which bashed you about for two or three hours and finally delivered you cowed and passion-spent at the point you started from; the film does the same, but the experience in the cinema is not what it was in the theatre, because the audience-involvement of the play is necessarily lacking.

Cinema has its own ways of involving the audience, of course, and the success of Mike Nichols' adaptation ought largely to lie in the degree to which he substitutes cinematic for theatrical reality. Ought, but not is: in fact, attention is deflected by the casting. How would we have looked at it if instead of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton the film had starred Uta Hagen and Arthur Hill? Rather differently, I expect. The past outpourings of the Burton and Taylor publicity machines cut right across Albee's intentions (insofar as those intentions can be made out from seeing the play or reading the text) by undermining the audience's willingness to be persuaded that what they are seeing on the screen could be happening to real people in a real place.

There was nothing in the least real about the conventional set which was the background for the play on the stage, but a theatre audience deals in psychological realities and such things don't matter. In the cinema, on the other hand, they matter very much indeed: a book must be a book, a wall must be a wall, a campus must be a campus. The book and the wall and the campus are all right in Mike Nichols' film, but the audience is bound to wonder what in hell's name Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton are doing there. The play of *Who's Afraid* was a literary and theatrical phenomenon. The film is still both these things, but something else besides: it is that something else—the intrusion of personality of the wrong kind on such a scale—that's regrettable. From another tack, it isn't that Miss Taylor and Mr. Burton are not adequate for their roles; it is that they are more than adequate, with that excess of acting talent which finally becomes exhibitionism.

It is possibly the increased voltage in the characterisations of George and Martha which makes the film seem almost sentimental by comparison with the play. In the play the scope somehow contracts when we learn the truth about George and Martha's son; what we have been watching suddenly seems contrived, even shallow. In the film this impression is even stronger, partly because the images of truce and reconciliation at the end seem too heavily stressed, and also because the business of Martha's "big sloppy kiss" in the first act is more effective than on the stage: there is a real warmth in Elizabeth Taylor's performance at this point which nothing that happens subsequently quite destroys. The bond between the characters, in the play, is apparent enough, but in the film it becomes a bond of affection: a crucial shift in emphasis which takes the edge off the play's harshness.

Otherwise, this is a pretty faithful film-of-the-play. It moves away from the set in Act Two, for a sequence in a roadhouse, but without in my opinion seriously dissipating energy. It introduces the odd, teasing visual idea, such as the winking indicator of Martha's abandoned car (a signal of distress?). Because film deals in physical realities, its attempt to nail down George and Martha by their possessions—notably by their books—is understandable, necessary and finally irrelevant. Its Nick (George Segal) and Honey (Sandy Dennis) are

NEWMAN AND ANDREWS IN "TORN CURTAIN".



self-effacingly and stunningly well, particularly the girl. It has a musical contribution by Alex No camera style is fluid, without cla for attention. The lighting av temptations of being over-dramati harshly contrasty, and in the achieves a richness of tone-gradatio effectively suggests both emotion and the underlying human stab resource. In the end, though *Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Warn is for its principal actors, and the c there to record their performance is a certain reassuring roughnes seams, which is liable to show its beginning or end of a shot, when sometimes catch a glimpse of one opening up or shutting down. think one can object to this. In a v kind of guarantee to the audier whoever this George and Martha they really care.

JAN

LE SIGNE DU LION and THE SEASON FOR LOVE

BOTH *LE SIGNE DU LION* (Connois The Season for Love (Sebricon) which seem somehow to have got let Eric Rohmer directed the former when it was still possible to talk a New Wave without conscious cliché. Pierre Kast made *La Morte-Saison des Amours* (the English title might have made a fairer stab at translation) a year later. Neither film has been fairly treated by the time-lag; but both are extremely well worth catching up with, likeable enough to make one wish they had arrived in their proper season.

Rohmer's film is perhaps the more obviously of its year. One senses behind it ideas about improvisation, freedom, the power of the camera on the loose, which have since been tested and extended in more artful directions. The opening, in fact, with the American in Paris thinking he has inherited his aunt's fortune and throwing a haphazard party on borrowed money to celebrate, looks almost dauntingly aimless: people stand around as though groping for something to say; the camera turns its wayward attention on cars accelerating off into the dusk.

The film tightens its grip, however, as it finds its subject. It turns out that there is no inheritance; and the big, sleepy, fortyish American (Jess Hahn) settles back into what seems almost a routine of sponging. But Paris in August has been handed over to the tourists, friends have vanished on holiday, and he finds himself a man penniless and alone in a city. From minor stratagems (meals eaten off newspaper in a hotel room; the dodging of landladies), and the stage when sardine oil spilt on a trouser leg can still seem a significant catastrophe, he slides into a timeless apathy of hunger and defeat. There is a hot, slow trudge back from the suburbs after a futile job hunt; a prolonged effort to fish a soggy packet of potato crisps from the river; days on park benches and nights on pavements. And, essentially, there is the city, ruthlessly given over to summer pleasure, with Nicholas Hayer's camera picking up the cool glint of sunlight reflected in water, or the feeling of heat bouncing back off stone walls.

Rohmer's reluctance to dramatise gives *Le Signe du Lion* a sticky opening and a

snatches of overheard conversations; the half-hearted attempts at stealing a bun or a packet of biscuits; the long passages in which the American simply sits, walks, fiddles with bits of string tying up a broken shoe, are not weighted or fictionalised (as similar scenes are, for instance, in the recent Danish adaptation of Hamsun's *Hunger*). They give the feeling of being filmed as they happen; and they happen to a man whose own reaction time is being slowed down by aimlessness as much as by starvation. The twist at the end, when the hero, by now totally submerged in the life of a *clochard*, surfaces again on the resurrection of the aunt's fortune, seems too tidy an ironic device for a film otherwise so resolutely (and sometimes amusingly) unstressed. But it fits Rohmer's feeling for—to borrow from M. Kast's title—the *morte-saison* of Paris. His film is about a city at this season as well as a man.

La Morte-Saison des Amours belongs to a tradition altogether more urbane. Here are the sophisticated talkers of the French cinema, swapping quotations (from Saint-Simon to Sagan) as well as wives. The two couples involved are a young writer and his wife, and a rich landowner married to a woman of strenuous ambition. Feudal lord (Daniel Gélin) gives up his chain of mistresses for the apparent guilelessness of the novelist's wife (Françoise Arnoul). The writer (Pierre Vaneck) engages in a frustrating affair with the cut-glass beauty (Françoise Prévost) with the balance-sheet mind. At the end, the more romantic trio set off for some kind of *ménage à trois*, leaving the chatelaine to her feudal responsibilities, her account books, and her new (male) secretary.

Pierre Kast directs as though he felt the dialogue (by himself and Alain Aptekman) were well worth listening to; which, on the whole, it is. Conversation dominates, and to this extent the film is unashamedly literary. Beneath the surface gamesmanship, however, as the couples engage and disengage, feeling breaks out. The unsuccessful writer,

ideas of their roles in life. It was a brilliant stroke to use as a location La Saline des Chaux, the uncompleted 18th century town built in the Jura by Claude-Nicholas Ledoux, a setting which itself emphasises both theatricality and romantic imperfection. This vague, beautiful ruin exists out of time: an unfinished monument to lost illusions. And the setting, aided by Sacha Vierny's camera-work, provides its counterpoint to the plot, rescuing it from banality, justifying the conscious artifice. Pierre Kast's film is a kind of 18th century comedy of manners into which the 20th century insistently breaks: necessarily self-conscious, but with intelligence to support its affectations.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

THE BIBLE . . . IN THE BEGINNING

IT SEEMS AN AGE—actually it was 1963—since Dino De Laurentiis announced his production of *The Bible* (Fox). His original pipedream envisaged ten hours running time, several directors (Bresson, Fellini, Visconti, Welles), a Stravinsky score, an all-star cast. Bresson for the Garden of Eden in 70mm. seemed an unlikely possibility from the start; as did his search in London and Paris for a suitable Eve—willing, of course, to appear naked and unashamed. Now, three years later and after passing from one distributor to another, *The Bible* has appeared, confined to about the first twenty pages (from The Creation to Abraham and Isaac), all controlled by one director, John Huston, and lasting just under three hours. Does it live up to its unprecedented publicity? No. Did one ever expect it to? Well, not really.

The main trouble is that, despite all announcements to the contrary, the film

like landscape is like a child's first vision of the Bible story.

After the interval, plot takes over with a vengeance. The Tower of Babel looks imposing enough with its thousands of extras. But it is really nothing more than a living ant-hill, and Huston fails to find much to do with it. The film ends with a long slog through the Abraham and Isaac story, and a short visit to Sodom and Gomorrah (done 'impressionistically', as the publicity has it), in which most of the debauchery is left to the audience's imagination. Writing a script for *The Bible* must have been an unenviable

Carthy's novel; but the gap looks more accidental than the result of conscious direction. The film, in fact, shows little sign of conscious direction at all. Miss McCarthy's compulsive nagging at the truth is completely absent, and so too is her sense of moral values awash. Complex irony has been replaced by simple nostalgia, uncomfortable intelligence by a cosy sympathy. In intellectual attitude the film ranges from one high point: "Women should be womanly," to the complementary peak: "Men!!!" And director and writer back moral favourites much more than Miss McCarthy did.

"THE GROUP".



The Group is pleasant. The narrative may seem from time to time like a trip—question posed, cut, answer—but Lumet and his experienced writer, Sidney Buchman, weave the plots neatly, softening a moment here, heightening a moment there, come up with a very presentable era. Boris Kaufman's colour photograph of New York is suitably pretty, the sets are well chosen on the whole, and one or two good period settings—apartment, for example, or a tea-room picture house. Lumet, by plugging choral songs all through the film, makes a boring contrast between the commencement Day hopes and their achievements. This is grossly sentimental in the context, but the sentimentality changes the fact that the plot developments are interesting in themselves, and can be unabashedly with *Peyton Place*.

These things combine to give the film a more depth and weight than this story would suggest. One is that the film retains large quantities of Miss McCarthy's factual detail, and one realises how extraordinarily exact her observations are. In spite of the softening and dramatic process, great stretches of the story are convincing. Mary McCarthy saw reality ironically, the film treats her romantically, but the reality remains, a second strength-giver, for which the director should also be given credit, is the high level of performance.

Joan Hackett plays Dottie, the practical romantic with the what-not in her lap, with a soulful, equine precision that is very funny, and later even carries off an unnecessarily melodramatic plot change by acquiring an alcoholic glaze which is more than commonly credible. Shirley Knight, as sweet, brave Polly, sometimes glows too much, but generally gives a firm, intelligent interpretation. Hal Holbrook and James Broderick, Polly's two men, both dodge very cleverly between being absurd and understandable; and Candice Bergen smiles handsomely as Lesbian Lakey. In playing nasty Libby Jessica Walter suffers from the script. The spleen it didn't expend elsewhere it saves up for her—there's no argument about the fact that Libby isn't nice. There are moments, though, when the actress looks capable of more than caricature, if she were to be given more. And Joanna Pettet persuades one to accept the disjointedly written part of Kay, whose death purportedly holds the film together. Thanks to the actors, *The Group* is still capable of engaging an audience's mind.

J. H. FENWICK

TO LOVE

JORN DONNER'S SECOND FILM, *To Love* (Amanda Films), is about a period of adjustment between the end of one marriage and the beginning of another, described in a tone of ironic humour which can hardly avoid being labelled as typically Scandinavian. All the customary preoccupations are assembled: the impotence of the Church, demonstrated by the neatly studied uneasiness of the funeral gathering; the aching void of marriage in general, defined in a bedside book as a 'corroding lesson in submission and defeat'; the nostalgic splendour of the Swedish summer, celebrated through photographs of an affectionate past; and the hectic, recurring

exuberance of bedroom weekends, awarded the usual allowance of heaving bedclothes and bare flesh. It could all be too much like caricature to take seriously, but for Donner's shorthand narrative style which clips off much of the idiocy before it has a chance to do any damage. The resultant flow of terse visual phrases has an uncloying directness which commands respect and attention.

Donner's theme is, perhaps despite itself, a serious one. His concern is with emotional freedom, which his characters sample enquiringly like a new kind of fruit before deciding which way to commit themselves. The mother and the dispassionate young son never do reach a decision; it is the travel agent (Zbigniew Cybulski) who capitulates first by proposing matrimony, while the enthusiastic widow (Harriet Andersson) only gives up her new-found emancipation after some soul-searching on the stairs. Donner's conclusion is not altogether optimistic—one suspects he would prefer his lovers to go their separate ways—but it has a cheerful fatalism in keeping with the consistent zest of his cast. In retrospect, it is this levity of *Att Alska (To Love)* that one remembers, rather than its touches of gloom; Cybulski and Harriet Andersson may not have understood much of each other's language but they plainly enjoyed the larking around, the pantomime, and the funny faces. Both have done the same performance many times before, and together they contrive to produce a flutter of idiosyncracies that does wonders for the mood of the film, if not for its story.

While giving them a free run, Donner surrounds his actors with a patchwork of curious details which are sometimes quite plainly experiments that don't come off—the ice-hockey match, the boy and his goldfish, the shot from nowhere of Harriet Andersson getting out of a bath, and the genial television talk about pregnancy attended by an incredulous class of infants. He also ventures unsuccessfully into some Godard-type generalisations about contemporary hazards, with such cut-ins as a programme on sausage-making, a pop song, a montage of road accident photographs, and a brief fantasy shot of the perfect beach. If he could be accused of being perfunctory as much for convenience as to avoid the conventional, Donner has undoubtedly succeeded in creating a wholly likeable miscellany of Scandinavian characteristics.

PHILIP STRICK

A FINE MADNESS

THE LUCK OF GINGER COFFEY was one of those uncommonly well-made independent productions which justifiably wins critical acclaim but could hardly be described as cheerful, and, for obvious reasons, reaches only a minority audience. It is not particularly usual for the directors of the *Ginger Coffeys* of this world to turn to risking their reputations on Technicolor New York comedies that must either sparkle extremely brightly or fall very flat indeed. This, however, is exactly what Irvin Kershner did when he plunged into making *A Fine Madness* (Warner-Pathé); and the risk has paid off.

A Fine Madness is about Samson Shillitoe, a poet who is mad at least north-north-west, played by, of all unlikely actors, Sean Connery; and it is a film of unexpected lightness. This may be explained to some extent by the fact that Shillitoe's slightly pugilistic wife is portrayed with her custom-



"FANTASTIC VOYAGE".

ary aplomb by Joanne Woodward, and also by the inescapable charm of scenes like the one in the sanatorium when Shillitoe's psychiatrist's wife (Jean Seberg) gets into the poet's remedial ripple bath with him. Sean Connery/Shillitoe, archetype of the frustrated genius, shocking the gathering of cultured ladies come to hear him read his poems; being mildly vamped by most females he meets, from the dumb secretary who so misleads him as to lose him his job with a carpet-cleaning firm, to the lady doctor who shelters him in her sanatorium for a while; hurtling like a bomb into the tail end of a demonstration upon a chimpanzee of prefrontal lobotomy, an operation later carried out on him in the vain hope of turning him into a normal non-poet: all this is a well-trying type of nonsense, with a sound grounding in verisimilitude, that needs the right touch to emerge as both wild and funny. Kershner has this touch and his film never loses our amused attention.

The outstanding quality of *Ginger Coffey* was its arresting atmosphere; after seeing it one will probably always remember Montreal a little grimly, psychologically as well as physically, as Kershner visualised it for the film. It is interesting to notice the same talent for playing variations on a single mood being exercised in *A Fine Madness*. But here all is lightness, accentuated by Ted McCord's pastel-shaded New York.

ELIZABETH SUSSEX

FANTASTIC VOYAGE

FANTASTIC VOYAGE (Fox) at least begins with signs of knowing where it is going, and for some fifteen minutes keeps its tantalising secret. Czech scientist, smuggled from behind the Iron Curtain, is rushed from American airport to secret subterranean headquarters of CMDF. Interception, car smash, a fire; normal brain operation on injured scientist impossible; cheeky little jeeps scurry busily through the antlike labyrinth of CMDF corridors. Richard

Fleischer directs with pace and apparent good-humour, as if only too aware that the vogue for organisational initials (CMDF = Combined Miniature Defence Forces) has all but had its day. Admirable, too, the way in which the secret is let out: a team of scientists in an experimental submarine, the Proteus, will be miniaturised to microbe size and injected into the unconscious man's bloodstream, thence piloting their craft to the brain within 60 minutes to clear the otherwise fatal blood-clot. There is a delightful minimum of explanation (how can one expound the truly absurd?) and one is already grateful for the awareness, in retrospect, that the teeming CMDF corridors are a neat analogy of the arterial voyage to come.

Alas, hopes are diminished almost as rapidly as the Proteus and its clichéd crew (Dr. Duval, "top brain surgeon"; Cora Peterson, his "attractive and competent assistant"; and so on right down to the inevitable unsuspected saboteur played by Donald Pleasence with all the discretion of an unmasked Phantom of the Opera). Technically, the film is only too obviously under all kinds of strain, as if trying to live up to a budget which it never wanted in the first place. Years ago, a modest Jack Arnold B-picture for Universal, *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, achieved more with sheer imagination than this film manages with a special effects roster as long as your arm. The back projection here is so clumsy that it destroys any sense of involvement: connection between these heavily-haloed travellers and their venous trail is non-existent, so that, despite all the detours and setbacks, boredom soon sets in. Colour filters in themselves are of little sophisticated value—at any rate, they fail to enhance an inner bodily world composed largely of candy floss, jelly babies, piano wires and lumps of coal. It remains to record a revival of pleasure in the last few minutes. While the voyagers escape by swimming along a tear duct, the by now raving Pleasence is trapped in the sabotaged submarine, and attacked, crushed and devoured by a mass of MACROPHAGES!

PETER JOHN DYER

FILM CLIPS

WHO CAN RESIST THE PROSPECT of talking to Hitchcock? Not I, certainly, and during his visit in August to publicise *Torn Curtain* I was heading towards Claridges at the first opportunity. Among other things—like the role of the freeway in modern American life, and the oddities of British government at any time—we talked about writers in Hollywood: in Hitchcock's opinion the element of film-making most dangerously lacking there at present. Hence, perhaps, his decision to import Age and Scarpelli to write his next film (which now won't be because he can't get the script to go right) and Waterhouse and Hall to do some work on the final script of *Torn Curtain*. (Brian Moore gets the sole screen credit, following an adjudication by the Screenwriters' Guild.)

We talked about writers Hitchcock had worked with. Ben Hecht, for instance. "Hecht was a professional: a strange man, but a professional. I remember I used to have lunch with him quite often around the time that he was in Britain's bad books—you know, 'My heart sings every time a British soldier dies . . .' His heart never sang when a British soldier died: his world was entirely bound up in Hollywood.

"I remember the only time I saw him really worked up about Palestine was when a man engaged in Zionist propaganda in America turned up over lunch to tell him they were going to blow up his ship. There was a ship for illegal immigrants which they had named the 'Ben Hecht', and for some reason they had decided it would be good propaganda to leave it where the British more or less had to sink it and then complain. But Ben was furious: 'Why my ship? Why should you blow up my ship? Blow up somebody else's goddam ship!'

"If you had Hecht writing a film, you knew where you were. At least, you knew the end product would turn out all right. The trouble was to find out just how much he had written himself. He ran a real script factory, did Hecht. He would parcel it out, saying 'Dummy it out for me, would you?' Then he would go over the result, touching it up here, rewriting there, and you would end up with a good piece of professional scripting, however exactly it came about."

Talking of writers, I said, how much did Raymond Chandler have to do with the script of *Strangers on a Train*? "Very little, really. Czenzi Ormonde and I used to go

down to his house each day to talk it over, but he never seemed able to work up any interest in it. One of us would come up with an idea, and he'd say, 'Yes, that's fine. I don't know why you want me on this when you can do it perfectly well yourselves.' The thing that surprised me most was that he seemed to have no interest in factual accuracy or physical believability. For instance, when the Robert Walker character arrives in town to commit his murder, he wants to leave no impression at all. He is just a faceless stranger passing through. So what does Chandler suggest he should do first? Buy a used car! Now if there is any way of making quite certain your presence anywhere will be noted and filed, it is to buy a used car, since you have to produce all your credentials. But when I pointed this out to Chandler he took it quite easily; he couldn't be persuaded that it really mattered at all..."

(Incidentally, a friend who talked to Chandler about Hitchcock tells me that he too seemed to have found the collaboration difficult. What troubled him was Hitchcock's apparent lack of interest in psychological accuracy. While Chandler worried about the most believable thing to be done by someone in a particular situation, Hitchcock always knew where they had to be—a tennis championship, a fairground roundabout—and was concerned mainly with devising ways of making his characters fit the pre-arranged pattern in as few moves as possible.)

Reminiscences about Hitchcock's early days in Hollywood brought up some details that I at least didn't know. We were talking about the role of the producer. "Of course in those days it was a producer's cinema, absolutely. I remember what surprised me when I went to work for Selznick on

Rebecca was that he always spoke with admiration about Thalberg as 'a genius with finished film.' But I soon got to understand that this was just what all the great producers were. They couldn't begin to visualise what a film would look like: they had to have it tangibly there, in front of them, to work on.

"In the great days at Metro they would have a script drafted, and then get Van Dyke or someone of the sort to direct it in about three weeks. They would put a roughcut together, and the producer would come in to look at it. Then they'd preview it somewhere out in the wilds, check the cards and make notes. And then they'd reshoot and re-edit all over the place for another three weeks or more. And finally they would have a film. They got a lot of successes that way, but when you think of the number of films they were making altogether I doubt whether the proportion of successes was any better than it is now.

"All this still obtained when I arrived in Hollywood. Do you know, they wouldn't allow a director to do any retakes during shooting even for some purely technical reason, like that there wasn't any film in the camera? What was the point? The sequence might not be in the final film anyhow. This was all very strange and worrying to me on *Rebecca*, as I had never worked this way in England. But even worse was when Selznick came up to me on the day I finished shooting and told me they were previewing it in a fortnight.

"And so they did: we threw a roughcut together, put on some temporary music, and carted it off to a preview in some one-horse Western town. Then Selznick brooded over the audience reactions, and then we began another three weeks or so of reshooting, combining two sequences into one, shot in

REX HARRISON AS DOCTOR DOLITTLE.



a different location, adding and eliminating characters, rewriting dialogue. Of course you could do that then: stars were on contract and just around the corner anyway. When it took five days to get from Hollywood to New York, instead of just a few hours, it stood to reason that they would be.

"But I did get my own way more than most, right from the start. Not being used to this way of shooting, I shot only what I knew I was going to need for the way I intended to edit the scene. I never bothered about 'cover', master-shots and all the rest. So when Selznick came to re-edit, he found that all he had to play with was what was actually in the edited film. 'You and your damned jigsaw shooting methods,' he said to me one day. 'How do you expect me to get a film out of this!'"

I HAVE BEEN DOING some oddly assorted studio visiting of late. One of the more unlikely trips was to Castle Combe, where, as everyone must be aware by now, the multi-million dollar musical *Doctor Dolittle* was shooting, with Rex Harrison, Samantha Eggar, Anthony Newley and seven major animal stars, plus thousands of four-footed extras. When I arrived everybody told me—as they inevitably do—that I should have been there the day before. They had been shooting the finale, 'Talk to the Animals', which required Rex Harrison to stand undaunted—or as undaunted as he could manage—while herds of animals converged on him from all sides in time to the music. Apparently this miracle of organisation had gone without a hitch; certainly Rex Harrison was there in full vigour the next day to prove it.

The *Dolittle* unit were pathetically in pursuit of the right weather, which continually eluded them. When they were ready to shoot the 'Rain' number the sun shone relentlessly down; as soon as bright sunlight was required it poured. The day I was there was betwixt and between, so Richard Fleischer would set up a scene, take refuge while the rains came, and then go ahead and shoot, with the aid of some powerful arcs presenting sunshine, as soon as the rain actually stopped.

The scene in question was a tricky little piece involving one of the animal stars, Sophie the seal, heavily disguised as a baby and trundled over some rough ground by Rex Harrison in an antiquated pram. Sophie, it seems, is one of the least temperamental of the film's players. Provided her trainer keeps her well primed with small fish (five pounds of it a day) she is quite happy. As long as she was the centre of Rex Harrison's attention, she basked comfortably. As soon as the action required him to leave her pram behind a bush while seeing if the coast was clear, she became restive and wriggled round to get a better view. Also, from time to time, it rained.

During one of the breaks I talked to Richard Fleischer, who is cheerfully full of gruesome Hollywood stories. For instance, concerning the short memories of producers: "When Richard Zanuck was setting up *Compulsion* as his first solo production he was treated just the same as any other producer on the lot: he had to get all details of costing and casting approved before he could start. Finally Darryl asked him, 'And who are you going to have direct the picture?' 'Well,' said Dick, 'I thought Richard Fleischer . . . ' 'Fleischer?' said Darryl. 'He did quite a good job on *The Vikings*, but he's only right for spectacles, organising battles



A SCENE FROM PETER BROOK'S FILM OF "THE MARAT/SADE"

and that, not for close-knit psychological dramas.' But Dick insisted, and eventually Darryl said all right . . . A few months later Darryl was setting up a big action film, and couldn't decide who should direct it. 'How about Fleischer?' says Dick. 'Fleischer? Are you crazy? Of course, he's fine on the small-scale psychological dramas like *Compulsion*, but action spectacle . . . '

"The trouble is, not only are you no better than your last picture, but you are practically indistinguishable from it. While I was directing *Fantastic Voyage* back in Hollywood, if I got offered one science fiction subject I got two dozen. Now I'm directing a musical for the first time in my life. I'm not halfway through it, no one has seen anything I've done, but already I have been offered three major musicals after I finish this. It's terrifying, when you come to think of it . . . "

Between shots, between showers, I was able actually to stroke Sophie the seal, who turned out to be unexpectedly silky to the touch and received all attentions with bland indifference as her due. I observed the village, and had the temporary nature of the set designer's inventions rather defensively explained to me. And I left them still struggling to keep Sophie happy, the camera running, and the rain switched off.

HOW DIFFERENT THIS fraught but well-spread method of shooting from the hysterical activity which buzzed about me when I turned up at Pinewood, a couple of days before Peter Brook was due to finish shooting his film version of the *Marat/Sade*. The schedule on this was perfectly simple, in principle at any rate: Day One, pages 1-9 of the script; Day Two, pages 10-18, and so on. Then—and this was the day I got there—scenes with the audience. For, since the play is in fact written as a play performed by the inmates of the Charenton asylum before an audience of outsiders, Peter Brook has decided to provide it with an audience in

the film as well—though an audience, rather surprisingly, dressed as modern Parisians.

For most of the film, apparently, they will be seen just as dark shapes reacting in the foreground while the drama goes on beyond them, and only at the very end will we get a close look at them head on. Meanwhile, the cameras (as with *Lord of the Flies* Brook is using two cameras, two crews, one the conventional, the other handheld and exploratory) were placed at the back of the set, the actors were nailed in (literally) behind their bars, and choice extracts from the play were delivered while the director lashed the audience into a frenzy of violent response.

Occasionally would be heard from the stage a plaintive "Peter, when we did this before I was over on the right, does it matter?" "No, no, never mind, we'll sort all that out later," came the optimistic reply, followed by, "Now, audience, for this scene you might crane forward; three in the second row, when he says that, stand up threateningly . . ." and so on. "Now," said Brook cheerfully at one point, "let's get on to the Copulation Mime. Let me see. Yes, you there, stand up on tiptoes to get a better look; you're very curious. You, you're indignant—make as though to walk out. You in the second row, you might turn to your neighbours and discuss what's going on. And you in the front row, um, er . . . " "Copulate?" supplies someone helpfully.

In a break in shooting the technicians tell me awed tales about the hours of rushes to be seen each day. The actors enthuse about the play, Peter Brook, and the excitement of it all, and fraternise graciously with the extras, most of whom actually are foreign. I eavesdrop on a conversation with one girl who proves to be, of all things, an out-of-work graphologist—the trouble, she says, is that English handwriting is so different from German. In Vienna she could read someone's character immediately, but in England she is quite at sea . . . Elsewhere, a bizarre conversation is going on about a

driving test: "So the examiner says to me, 'But why wouldn't you park just next to a zebra crossing?' And I said, 'I really couldn't tell you. But I know that it's something I definitely wouldn't do. I just couldn't do it.' And he said, 'Yes, but what would stop you?' And I said, 'I just don't know. But I do know that something inside me wouldn't let me. I promise you that, cross my heart.' And he said, 'All right, I believe you, I believe you. But what I want to know is *why* . . .'" The spirit of the entertainment, it seems, is catching.

I SUPPOSE IT WAS the legendary stature that *Peter Ibbetson* has achieved in the last few years, largely as a result of Ado Kyrrou's enthusiasm for it as one of the ultimate expressions of *amour fou* in the cinema, that filled the National Film Theatre when it was shown in the Paramount season recently. It is hard, anyway, to imagine what else might have done it. Henry Hathaway is hardly the most fashionable of directors; the cast (Gary Cooper, Ann Harding and, briefly but deliciously, a very young Ida Lupino) is not exactly one to set the pulses racing; and the film has, I would have thought, almost no underground reputation among Anglo-Saxons. Still, if André Breton and Luis Buñuel rave about it, there must be something there. Or must there?

The oddest thing, really, about the film's reputation among French surrealists is that it seems to be based almost entirely on what might have been made of the book rather than what Hathaway and his collaborators actually do make of it. Of course, the *idea* of *Peter Ibbetson* is an "hymne de l'amour fou"—love transcending all barriers of time and place in a shared dream world through which the Duchess, out of prison, stores up experience and transmits it to Peter inside. The film, however, largely ignores this, concentrating for most of its length on the not very interesting series of events which separates Peter and his beloved in childhood and finally brings them together again, almost too late. In other words Hathaway, an action director *par excellence*, has done all he can to make the static, interior story into one of external action, and seems decidedly unhappy when at last he is forced into visionary fantasy, with his two principals running ecstatically around what looks suspiciously like Forest Lawns. *Portrait of Jenny*, another Buñuel favourite, does the same sort of thing far better, because at least Dieterle has a more genuine feeling for this kind of romantic fantasy and his principals, Joseph Cotten and Jennifer Jones, are not so stubbornly earthbound as Hathaway's.

Maybe it is just that it is a very long time since any of *Peter Ibbetson*'s most enthusiastic supporters actually saw it, and they would be surprised today to find how small the part they remember bulks in the film's total footage. Or perhaps this is just another example of that phenomenon not unknown among French critics, or English critics either: that what they are praising so freely is not the film as it actually is, but the far more exciting film they would have made of it given half a chance. And if Buñuel in particular were given half a chance, then we might have a classic really worth all the ink which has been spilt over *Peter Ibbetson* during its long years of absence from our screens.

ARKADIN

Montgomery Clift



Montgomery Clift died on July 23rd, 1966, aged 45. His first film was Hawks' *Red River* (1946); his last Raoul Levy's *L'Espion* (1966). Among those in between: *The Search*, *The Heiress*, *A Place in the Sun*, *I Confess*, *From Here to Eternity*, *The Misfits*, *Freud*.

How well Monty Clift seemed when we last saw him, here in London, only a few short weeks ago. How enthusiastic he was about the next picture he was going to make—how alive and interested and excited by the new young English playwrights and actors.

How certain he was that all his problems and difficulties had been surmounted and that the future looked bright once more.

How can one describe the stature of the artist or the measure of the man—his relish and enjoyment of life, the fullness of his compassion, his stunning talent and his incredible sensibility? The best way is, perhaps, to tell about two incidents that happened during the twenty years of our friendship. Between them, both these anecdotes seem to come close to Monty's essence and his spirit. When we made *The Search* together, Monty was very young. He had a distinguished stage career behind him, but was unknown to the cinema public. His first film, *Red River*, had not yet been released. In *The Search*, Monty played a young American soldier, the friend of a war orphan who had escaped from a displaced persons' camp. At the end of the showing, someone from the audience came to me and asked this question:

"Where did you find a soldier who could act so well?"

The second incident happened several years later. By that time, Monty was already well-known. He and I had met in Venice and I took him to dinner at La Fenice. I introduced him to the head waiter, whom I know well, and I said "This is Montgomery Clift." The head waiter took one look at Monty, said spontaneously

"You're an artist" and promptly burst into tears. Thereupon Monty also burst into tears and these two strangers hugged each other, sobbing away.

How many artists will inspire that sort of love and emotion?

Fred Zinnemann

BOOK REVIEWS

A COMPETITIVE CINEMA, by Terence Kelly with Graham Norton and George Perry. (The Institute of Economic Affairs, 30s.)

IN THE EARLY HOURS of the morning, at an international film event, a very senior British film magnate downed his penultimate whisky and said: "The industry really has got to be reorganised." It was a startling conversion: there were gasps. Then, in the silence he had created, he added: "But the wonderful thing is that nothing can be done about it."

This, very definitely, is not the view of Terence Kelly who, with Graham Norton and George Perry, has produced one of the most thorough-going and comprehensive analyses of the British film industry ever to come from a non-official source. *A Competitive Cinema* is the result of two years' research which originated with the Bow Group. The book is a model of clarity which expounds as it explores the Alice in Wonderland complexities of cinema institutions and film finance. The views of the authors are fresh, apparently stimulated by what they found when they looked, and their conclusions are far from doctrinaire.

Broadly, they take the view that the industry is strangling itself by its own restrictions; and particularly by the custom of barring, the country-wide exhibition booking arrangements of the two giants, Rank and ABC, and the insistence of film unions on inefficient, costly use of manpower. But before their prescription for recovery they closely trace the present state of the industry and outline the crises which have dogged it over the years. Without prejudging, they show how the two giants armed themselves against the contraction of the industry. They rehearse the many conflicts of interest; the way successive governments have stepped in with such devices as the Quota, the Levy Fund (Eady money), and the National Film Finance Corporation in order to protect film production here. They also show how, more culpably, governments have failed to prevent the cinema getting bogged down in the slough of its own protective devices.

Rather, they see any government's more suitable role as the encourager of competition, protector of the consumer's right to be able to choose what he wants to see and what he will pay for. In other words to help free the market.

Their suggested way of bringing this about is not by the break-up of the functions (production, distribution and exhibition) as happened in the Fifties in the United States, nor by the creation of a third circuit to compete with Rank and ABC—one-time a much vaunted palliative here. Rather, they recommend the disestablishment of present national booking arrangements of the giants and the setting up of area booking divisions of roughly equal booking power. The independents could unite to form divisions of similar size (would they?); and thus in any one booking area there would, they suggest, be at least two, perhaps three groups in competition offering as high a return as each can afford to film producers as well as competitive booking dates. (These and other matters, of course, are more or less *sub judice* until the Monopolies Commission reports, as it is expected to do soon after Parliament reassembles.)

Economy of distribution, the authors say, could be achieved by a non-profitmaking film distribution clearing house, supported by all distributors, although they would still control their own selling, publicity, advertising and production finance. Thus there would be no privileged access to films, and no barring whereby one producer/distributor could reserve a film to the sole benefit of his own chain of cinemas. This might be enforced by law where necessary and by a Film Industry Tribunal composed of outsiders to whom complaints might be brought. It should "safeguard and not replace the market." The authors also suggest—not for the first time—a "little Noddy" to negotiate productivity deals. If such a development council encountered union recalcitrance it could recommend alteration to the proportion of labour costs which must be British

for a film to qualify for the Quota.

The Levy Fund, at the moment working to make the rich richer, needs adjustment. Among other things, £500,000 could be used as the main source of finance for the BFI (particularly for the National Film Archive, National Film Theatres outside London, and the Experimental Film Fund). It could also be used to help pay for our much needed national film and television school, assist low budget productions, and provide the cash for a system of quality awards supervised by the Arts Council.

It is only possible here to skim some of the proposals of *A Competitive Cinema*. It is full of sensible suggestions on a wide variety of subjects: a rational censorship; British Lion's (and ABC's) need of a showcase cinema in central London; the obligation of exhibitors to state when a film has been abridged, and so on.

The book is not likely to please people who think that the industry should be left to its own devices—nor those who talk about nationalisation. The authors say simply that public intervention to reform the practices and structure of the industry is not interference with the rights of private enterprise but a move towards the restoration of those rights. No one, on the other hand, owes the British film industry a living. It is quite capable of earning its own.

IAN WRIGHT

FELLINI, by Suzanne Budgen. Illustrated. (BFI Education Department, 8s. 6d.)

THE TROUBLE WITH having film critics review books on the film is that the reviewer is hardly ever able to put himself completely in the place of most of those who will actually buy and use the books. Same old subjects, he says, faced with another study of Antonioni or Hitchcock; and why all that stuff about the plot? Surely we could take that as read? And, of course, a film critic may be able to. But what of the average interested person, who has had just one chance to see a film, if that, and may never have another opportunity to check his recollections even of such a standard work as *La Strada*? It is, obviously, for such people that Miss Budgen's book is primarily designed. So it is about one of the same old subjects—Fellini rather than, say, Gance or Dovzhenko or William Wellman—and it does feature detailed accounts of what happens in several of its subject's films, sequence by sequence. But this is only right and proper; and as a work of reference it will no doubt serve its turn even with specialists who might feel that in principle such elementary matters had been left behind.

The main criticism to be levelled against the book, in fact, is that it does not function more consistently and wholeheartedly on this level. *Lo Sceicco Bianco* and *Il Bidone* could with advantage be given as thorough-going a summary as *La Strada* and *La Dolce Vita* (after all, they are no doubt less familiar to the average reader). *Luci del Varieta* is enough of a Fellini film to deserve comment, while *Fortunella*, for example, is near enough to, and yet so far from, Fellini as to rate at least a brief analysis for the light it throws on his directorial ways and means.

In place of a detailed study of the lesser works as well as the established masterpieces, we get quite a lot of rather slack critical generalisation; and while it is pleasant to find a critic who is generously and unselfconsciously appreciative of the at present rather unfashionable work of Fellini, it may be felt that Miss Budgen sometimes overdoes it.

Is *Le Notti di Cabiria*, for example, really on the same level as *I Vitelloni* or *La Strada* or *La Dolce Vita*, as Miss Budgen seems to assume without really arguing the point? While asserting that *Giulietta degli Spiriti* has been "misunderstood" and "remains a remarkable film" (true enough, I would say) Miss Budgen seems to draw timidly back from actually setting out to make a real case for it. But still, the book is full of useful facts, and for those at least it deserves a permanent place on the shelf.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

REFERENCE BOOKS AND BOOKSELLERS' CATALOGUES.

A TITLE GUIDE TO THE TALKIES (R. B. Dimmitt. Scarecrow Press, distributed by Bailey Bros. 2 vols, £23 15s.) identifies the literary sources, if any, of the 16,000 feature films released in the United States between October 1927 and December 1963. Bibliographical details are given, together with production company, date of release or copyright, producer (sometimes) and writer of an original screenplay (sometimes). An author index refers to item numbers. There are some errors, but it remains a useful tool.

THE BIOGRAPHICAL ENCYCLOPAEDIA AND WHO'S WHO OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE (W. Rigdon. James H. Heineman, New York, \$82.50) is a definitive reference work, which will be kept up to date by supplementary volumes. The main section of 3,350 biographies gives exhaustive lists of the subject's work in the theatre and cinema,

together with brief biographies, some information on radio and television work, and other activities such as writing. Interest to the film enthusiast lies in the number of film actors, directors, writers, etc. who have also worked in the American theatre (several Europeans are included within the terms of reference). Other sections include theatre playbills for 1959-1964 (New York and twelve repertory and experimental companies) and a bibliography.

INTERNATIONALE FILM-BIBLIOGRAPHIE, 1952-1962, edited by H. P. Manz, for Hans Rohr of Zurich, is the outstanding example of a bookseller's catalogue which can also serve as a useful bibliography of the cinema. Unfortunately, it has now been discontinued (although still available from Tantivy Press at 15s.; 1963/64 supplement 6s., 1965 supplement 8s.). Good catalogues are also issued by Le Minotaure in Paris, Larry Edmunds Bookshop in Hollywood (\$1.00 for a 249-page paperback); while the Munich bookseller Wolfgang Gielow's 200 duplicated page KATALOG III 1964/65 (18 DM.) usefully includes publishers and a name index of authors and subjects.

GILLIAN HARTNOLL

THE FESTIVALS: VENICE

continued from page 175

its grip. The film is due to be shown at the London Film Festival in November: argument to be continued, therefore.

I am much less dubious about Teshigahara's *Face of Another*, which is a return to the fascinating, obsessive style of *Woman of the Dunes*, based on a story by the same author, Kobo Abe, about a man whose face has been destroyed in a factory explosion, and who persuades a doctor to make him a new one from a substance he has discovered with the texture of human skin. Then he begins a double life in two flats—either armed with his new face, or else swathed in bandages like the Invisible Man—in an attempt to reconquer the love of his wife which ends with his realisation that there is no longer anything left in him to love. Rhymed with this story is a subplot of doom-laden references to death, disfigurement, Nazi Germany, atomic warfare, all carefully woven into a stabbing portrayal of fear and isolation. If the film is occasionally too overt in its message, it is also done with the same hallucinating ambiguity as *Woman of the Dunes*: one is never quite sure *exactly* what one is watching.

One should also spare a word for Alexander Kluge's first feature, *Abschied von Gestern*, not only because it is that rare bird, a sympathetic German film, but also because it shows signs of a genuinely creative talent at work. At the moment, Kluge owes almost everything to Godard. His story of Anita G., a Jewish girl who has fallen victim in turn to both West and East Germany, is obviously modelled on *Vivre sa Vie*, using Brechtian chapter headings, interview-speeches, and even similar situations (Anita G. sells records, is arrested for stealing, etc.). But for once one feels that a director has borrowed from Godard because he feels an affinity rather than because it is fashionable to do so; and apart from some ill-judged snatches of speeded-up motion, he almost brings off an ambitious attempt to show that, miracle or no miracle, Germany has not yet done with its past. "No abyss separates us from yesterday: only the situation is changed."

Finally, a grateful bow to the splendid Retrospective devoted to the American Twenties, to which one could turn for solace whenever the American independents threatened to drive one up the Palazzo wall. A handsome selection of some thirty films revealed (among other things) that both Gloria Swanson and Marion Davies were really accomplished comediennes, gave us Frank Tuttle's *Love 'em and Leave 'em* (starring Evelyn Brent and Louise Brooks: a poorish film, but the ladies are divine), and really requires an article to itself. Pick of the bunch was the legendary *It*, a comedy that hasn't aged a day, stars the enchanting Clara Bow, and is superbly directed by Clarence Badger (who also directed that great Raymond Griffith comedy *Hands Up!*, and is surely ripe for rediscovery). Running it close, though, are two King Vidor comedies starring Marion Davies, *The Patsy* and *Show People*, the latter being particularly interesting for its mocking inside-Hollywood story. And of course there was Garbo, illuminating—that is the only word for it—a singularly silly story in Clarence Brown's *Woman of Affairs*.

TOM MILNE

CORRESPONDENCE

Modesty Blaise

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—As a generality, *SIGHT AND SOUND* has possibly always been rather better at hypotheses than facts; but as there are certainly some cinéastes who like to collect facts as others collect stamps, I would like to put the record straight in respect of some of Miss Houston's remarks in her article on Joe Losey and *Modesty Blaise*.

Modesty Blaise was never at any time owned or controlled by Launder and Gilliat and therefore could never at any time have been passed by Launder and Gilliat to Mr. Losey as she states. It was never in any respect a Launder and Gilliat production (either during, after or before what Miss Houston fancifully imagines to have been "its St. Trinian's phase"), neither was it ever at any time intended to be; and Frank Launder in fact never had the slightest connection with the picture.

I was engaged in the first place to direct it and revised the existing script by Peter O'Donnell, the author of the *Evening Standard* strip and of the novel to which Miss Houston knowledgeably refers—but has evidently never read, since she attributes to Launder and myself a character who was in fact prominent in the source material, and retained, rightly or wrongly, first by me and then by Mr. Losey.

The producer from beginning to end was Joseph Janni (whom, curiously, Miss Houston never even mentions) for his company, Tiberia; and when he and I parted company in friendly disagreement, he subsequently engaged Mr. Losey. I might add that I declined any screenplay credit on a point of principle.

Yours faithfully,

SIDNEY GILLIAT

London, W.C.2.

Penelope Houston writes: I must apologise for mistakenly associating Mr. Launder with the 'Modesty Blaise' project. Otherwise, however, Mr. Gilliat seems to have read rather more than was intended into a very brief reference—I certainly hadn't meant to suggest that 'Modesty Blaise' was 'owned or controlled' by his company. As to the Scotch accountant character, my point was, precisely, that he seemed to belong to an earlier version of the story.

Criticism from Spain

SIR,—It's fairly depressing to see published in the pages of *SIGHT AND SOUND* such a poor article on the Spanish Cinema as the one by Claire Clouzot (Spring 1966). She writes about Southern Spain in *La Caza* and mentions Cadiz when writing about *Con el Viento Solano*. In both cases she is wrong.

Miss Clouzot writes that "Antonio Eceiza is the most daringly brilliant of the Young Turks": this is unfair to people like Picasso, Mario Camus, Eugenio Martin or Jorge Grau, who are far more brilliant than Eceiza has showed in his two films. But it's worse when she writes about *De Cuerpo Presente*, a flat film from a really brilliant novel which Miss Clouzot doesn't mention.

Her remarks about "commercial" directors, such as Mario Camus, Miguel Picazo and Manuel Summers—"those who by miracle or by compromise have found both critical and public acclaim"—seem out of place in the context of the Spanish film scene, unless a commercial director for Miss Clouzot is someone who makes a film and this film is seen and liked by an audience.

Miss Clouzot is also very unfair to *Con el Viento Solano*, not yet shown here but liked by every good critic and film director that I happen to know. Reading her article *The Young Turks of the Spanish Cinema*, I got the impression that instead of seeing every film with a good standard of values and trying to understand our film scene, Miss Clouzot just talked to a certain group of people, not even the best, and then wrote her article. As in almost everything, some things she says are true, but a minor part of the truth.

We don't have much luck with *SIGHT AND SOUND* notes on Spain, because the one you published on *Chimes at Midnight* by Pierre Billard (Spring 1965) had several important mistakes. One example: "On occasion, however, Welles' creative independence can begin to look like a caprice. So, feeling that his own American accent would grate on the perfect Shakespearean diction of actors such as John Gielgud, Margaret Rutherford and Keith Baxter, Welles didn't want to play his dialogue scenes directly with them. While they were there, he filmed only those shots in which he doesn't appear, or reaction shots in which he doesn't speak. Then, after they had gone, he went back to the same locations, to shoot his dialogue on his own."

This is false. There is no scene in the script between Falstaff

and Henry IV (Gielgud): and as for Margaret Rutherford and Keith Baxter, both of them played their scenes with Orson Welles. I can assure you of this, as I was personal assistant to Mr. Welles on the film, and was engaged from the production design time till the final mixing in Paris, after which I supervised the Spanish version.

As a Spanish critic I should like to see better articles about our country published in SIGHT AND SOUND. Above all more true to the reality, to the facts.

Yours faithfully,
JUAN COBOS,
Editorial Board: Griffith.

Madrid.

Christensen Continued

SIR,—I am grateful to Ib Monty (Correspondence, Summer number) for giving us the facts about *Seven Footprints to Satan* (1929), so often linked by historians with Benjamin Christensen's two preceding Chester Conklin vehicles as comedy-with-shivers. But I was surprised to see him refer to "eight missing films between the two Danish films" and even more surprised that he knew of only one film made by Christensen in Germany. In fact, the director made nine films outside Denmark, three of which were German: *Unter Juden* (1923), which gave Willi Fritsch his first important role; *Seine Frau, die Unbekannte*, again with Fritsch and Lil Dagover (1924, surely, not 1923?); and *Die Frau mit den Schlechten Ruf* (1925). He is also said to have done some script work for Dekla-Bioscope between *Unter Juden* and playing in *Mikael* for Dreyer in Germany.

As a final footnote to John Gillett's original article, it may be of interest that Christensen's later work in Denmark for the most part dealt soberly with sociological problems (my dates for this last creative period, culminating in *Damen med de Sorte Handsker*, do not coincide with Mr. Monty's). Rebellious adolescence, abortion, the effect of divorce on children... a far cry indeed from the romantic and daemonic obsessions of the earlier work.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES HIGHAM

Sydney, Australia.

Godard Quotations

SIR,—It is perhaps worth calling attention to the fact that the poem quoted on the soundtrack at the end of *Pierrot le Fou* is by Rimbaud (*Elle est retrouvée! Quoi? l'éternité*), especially since the next two lines express the image of the blinding sea at the horizon which Godard concludes with:

C'est la mer mêlée/Au soleil.

The whole film is what we are promised at the end of *Bande à Part*: Ferdinand and Marianne are Franz and Odile in the tropics in Technicolor. To a French audience the film has ironic overtones of *Paul et Virginie* (Godard goes out of his way to make the South of France look like a tropic island), in that in the original Rousseau-esque novel the lovers are innocent and Virginie is called away from nature's paradise by a rich and selfish relation and is appalled by the corruption of 'society'.

Also I haven't seen it mentioned that in *Alphaville* Lemmy Caution is reading Chandler in translation—*Le Grand Sommeil*. A nice gag in keeping with Dick Tracy.

Yours faithfully,
HARRY GUEST

Shoreham-by-Sea, Sussex.

Invasion of Britain

SIR,—In connection with research dealing with the possibility of an invasion of Britain before and during the First World War, I would be grateful to any readers of SIGHT AND SOUND who could indicate the whereabouts of any films produced before 1920 which took as their theme the possible invasion of Britain, especially the following:

ENGLAND'S MENACE (London Film Company)	Released, June 1914
IF ENGLAND WERE INVADED (Gaumont)	September 1914
AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME	September 1914
THE MIMIC BATTLE ON WHALE ISLAND	November 1914
WAKE UP!—A DREAM OF TOMORROW (also known as)	
ENGLAND UNDER INVASION (Union Jack Photo Plays)	December 1914

THE INVASION OF ENGLAND	?
THE INVASION OF BRITAIN (Ministry of Information)	September 1918
THE WARRIOR STRAIN (Claredon Film Company?)	1919

Yours faithfully,
HOWARD MOON
University of London
Institute of Historical Research,
Senate House, London, W.C.1.

CORRECTION

We regret that in the Summer SIGHT AND SOUND the photograph of Kevin Billington and Malcolm Muggeridge ("Zoom Out Slowly", page 139) was not credited, as it should have been, to Noël Chanan.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

20th CENTURY-FOX for *Dr. Dolittle*, *Fantastic Voyage*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *The Group*, *The Marat/Sade*.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Oh Dad, Poor Dad*.
WARNER-PATHE for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
WARNER-PATHE/DAIEI for *The Key*.
BLC/COLUMBIA for *The Chase*.
BLC/COLUMBIA/HIGHLAND FILMS for *A Man for all Seasons*.
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Torn Curtain*.
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *La Guerre est Finie*.
CONNOISSEUR FILMS for *Les Carabiniers*.
CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *The Burmese Harp*.
CONTEMPORARY FILMS/ARGOS FILMS-RTF for *La Jetée*.
AMANDA FILMS/SANDREWS for *To Love*.
BRIDGE FILMS/M-G-M for *The Blow-Up*.
INTERNACIONAL FILMS for *Chimes at Midnight*.
CESKOSLOVENSKY FILM for *Who Wants to Kill Jessie?*, *Every Young Man*.
ECO/TRANSCONTINENTAL for *Nueve Cartas a Berta*.
EUROPA FILM for *A Sunday in September*.
SANDREWS-FENNADA for *Adventure Starts Here*.
R. D. BANSAL/SARAR KUMARI BANSAL for *Nayak*.
NIKKATSU for *The Heart*.
DAIEI for *The Sin*, *The Revenge of Yukinojo*, *Punishment Room*.
TOKYO EIGA/TESHIGAHARA PRODUCTIONS for *The Face of Another*.
DINO DE LAURENTIIS for *Un Uomo a Metà*.
ABC TELEVISION for photographs of Orson Welles.
JORN DONNER for *Roofree*, photograph of Jorn Donner.
FRED ZINNEBANN for photograph of Montgomery Clift.

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SOLE AGENTS for U.S.A.: Eastern News Distributors, 155 West 15th Street, New York 10011.

PRINTED BY Brown Knight & Truscott Ltd., London, England.

BLOCKS by W. F. Sedgwick, Ltd., London.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES (4 issues), 20s. including postage.

U.S.A.: \$4. Price per copy in United States, \$1.

PUBLICATION DATES: 1st January, 1st April, 1st July, and 1st October. Overseas Editions: 12th of these months.

The image shows the cover of the Fall Issue of TDR (Tulane Drama Review). At the top, the TDR logo is visible with the text 'TULANE DRAMA REVIEW' underneath. The main title 'AMERICA'S LARGEST & MOST INFLUENTIAL THEATRE MAGAZINE' is prominently displayed. Below this, it says 'FALL ISSUE' and 'FILM THEORY AND THEATRE PRACTICE'. A list of featured authors and topics follows: 'ARTICLES & INTERVIEWS', 'BLINA BARAK WEISS', 'BANDOLFI BERGMAN', 'BROOK VANDERBEEK', 'SONTAG ANDERSON', and 'SVOBODA PLANCHON'. At the bottom, the subscription information is provided: '\$5 YR./\$1.50 COPY' and 'TDR/TULANE UNIV./NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70118'.

FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars.

ARABESQUE (Rank) Charade all over again, as Peck and Loren get mixed up with Arabs, hieroglyphics and wicked oil magnates. Only this time it's all rather too flashy for comfort, with the camera going crazy over arabesques and reflected images. (Alan Badel, Kieron Moore; director, Stanley Donen. Technicolor, Panavision.)

ASSAULT ON A QUEEN (Paramount) Frank Sinatra and motley international gang dredge up antique sunken U-Boat and play at holding up the *Queen Mary* on the high seas. A very tall story, which gains nothing in the telling. (Verna Lisi, Tony Franciosa, Richard Conte; director, Jack Donohue. Technicolor.)

***BIBLE, THE** (Fox) After four years of fairly constant advertising at last it's arrived and pretty boring it turns out to be. Huston clearly enjoyed doing Noah's Ark, but the Creation is disappointingly unspectacular and the actors fight a losing battle against the script's deliberate archaisms. (Richard Harris, George C. Scott, Peter O'Toole. Technicolor, 70 mm.) Reviewed.

***BIG DEAL AT DODGE CITY** (Warner-Pathé) An engaging O. Henryish story, very indifferently directed, about a marathon poker game and the little lady who uses her winsome charm to sweep the board. The admirable cast makes it worth a look. (Joanne Woodward, Henry Fonda, Kevin McCarthy, Jason Robards; director, Fielder Cook. Technicolor.)

CARRY ON SCREAMING (Warner-Pathé) Moribund addition to the *Carry On* canon, quite possibly the worst of the series. The cast look bored to distraction. (Harry H. Corbett, Kenneth Williams, Fenella Fielding; director, Gerald Thomas. Eastman Colour.)

CAST A GIANT SHADOW (United Artists) *Exodus* revisited, with Kirk Douglas as an American leading an immigrant army against Egyptian tanks. Desert battles well staged; otherwise too conscious of its subject. (Senta Berger, Angie Dickinson, Luther Adler; director, Melville Shavelson. Technicolor, Panavision.)

****CHASE, THE** (BLC/Columbia) Violent saga of a decadent Texas town, with Brando as the sheriff fighting a lone battle for integrity. Starts well, but ends hysterically with Arthur Penn piling on the allegorical significance. (Robert Redford, Jane Fonda, E. G. Marshall. Technicolor, Panavision.) Reviewed.

***DECADENT INFLUENCE, THE** (Antony Balch) Claude Lelouch film (*Une Fille et des Fusils*) about a group of teenagers who teach themselves to become model criminals by drawing inspiration from the cinema. Much too cute for its own good, but quite brilliantly photographed. (Jacques Portet, Pierre Barouh, Amidou, Jean-Pierre Kalfon.)

***DOCTOR ZHIVAGO** (M-G-M) Curiously synthetic rendering of Pasternak's elusive novel. Omar Sharif, Julie Christie and Geraldine Chaplin pall beside the originals, and Freddie Young's picture postcard photography is no substitute for the sweep of Pasternak's Russia. (Rod Steiger, Ralph Richardson, Alec Guinness; director, David Lean. Metrocolor, Panavision 70.)

******ENGAGEMENT, THE [I FIDANZATI]** (Contemporary) A young workman takes a job in Sicily; his fiancée stays behind in Milan... A dauntingly simple subject, illuminated not only by Olmi's meticulous detail but by the way he jumps the time barrier to make memory subjective. (Carlo Cabrini, Anna Canzi.)

***FANTASTIC VOYAGE** (Fox) A marvellous idea (journey by miniature submarine through the human body) realised with flashes of real imagination; but also, unfortunately, acres of silly dramatics and gruesome back-projection. (Stephen Boyd, Arthur Kennedy, Raquel Welch, Donald Pleasence; director, Richard Fleischer. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.) Reviewed.

FIGHTING PRINCE OF DONEGAL, THE (Disney) Peter McEnery as a swashbuckling Irish prince resisting the rule of Elizabeth I. Some quite vigorous action scenes, but script and direction on the lumbering side. (Susan Hampshire, Andrew Keir, Gordon Jackson; director, Michael O'Herlihy. Technicolor.)

****FINE MADNESS, A** (Warner-Pathé) Unexpected dive into crazy comedy (with serious overtones) by Irvin Kershner, done with his usual sensitivity and some fine New York locations. Joanne Woodward particularly engaging as the berserk poet's wife, but the film itself is patchy. (Sean Connery, Jean Seberg, Patrick O'Neal. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

FIREBALL 500 (Warner-Pathé) American-International blend of teenage romance, songs and stock car racing. Marginally better than the comedies in the series, and the stock cars look good. (Frankie Avalon, Annette Funicello, Fabian; director, William Asher. Pathé Color, Panavision.)

***GEORGY GIRL** (BLC/Columbia) Zany comedy about rather plain girl's involvement with elderly lecher and crazy boy friend. Everyone tries very hard and there are some amusing domestic eruptions, but its barrage of fashionable tricks proves exhausting. (Lynn Redgrave, James Mason, Alan Bates; director, Silvio Narizzano.)

****GROUP, THE** (United Artists) Perhaps not quite Mary McCarthy, but a splendid job of good old-fashioned Hollywood craftsmanship just the same: nostalgic soap-opera, done with wit and style to spare in Buchman's script and Kaufman's camerawork. (Shirley Knight, Joan Hackett, Candice Bergen, Hal Holbrook; director, Sidney Lumet. DeLuxe Color.) Reviewed.

******GUERRE EST FINIE, LA** (Gala) Resnais' study of a man committed to the lost cause of the Spanish Republic, and the lost life of a secret agent. Dazzling interplay of themes and ideas, all the way from straightforward thriller to subliminal intimations of what it means to live in exile. (Yves Montand, Ingrid Thulin, Geneviève Bujold.) Reviewed.

HOW TO STEAL A MILLION (Fox) Terribly wordy and slow, although mildly enjoyable during the robbery sequence in a Paris art gallery. Only a great comedy director could have made something of it and Wyler just hasn't got the style nowadays. (Audrey Hepburn, Peter O'Toole, Hugh Griffith. DeLuxe Color, Panavision.)

***I WAS HAPPY HERE** (Rank) Synthetic Irish romanticism (girl leaves oppressive London for the simple pleasures of her Irish youth). Impeccably made, well photographed, but finally artificial. (Sarah Miles, Sean Caffrey, Cyril Cusack; director, Desmond Davis.)

KALEIDOSCOPE (Warner-Pathé) American gambler breaks into playing-card factory and marks his cards before they're printed, as short-cut to a tax-free fortune. Fair to middling comedy thriller, of the let's keep it swinging at all costs school. (Warren Beatty, Susannah York, Clive Revill; director, Jack Smight. Technicolor.)

***KHARTOUM** (United Artists) Relentlessly academic account of Gordon's last stand, beautifully photographed, lavishly mounted, intelligently acted, but ultimately dull. Charlton Heston steals all the honours from Laurence Olivier's blackamoor Mahdi. (Ralph Richardson, Richard Johnson; director, Basil Dearden. Technicolor, Ultra Panavision presented in Cinerama.)

LIQUIDATOR, THE (M-G-M) Lifeless sortie into sub-Bondery, with Rod Taylor as the reluctant spy. Almost as jaded as the genre. (Trevor Howard, Jill St. John, Akim Tamiroff; director, Jack Cardiff. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

***NAKED PREY, THE** (Paramount) Cornel Wilde directs himself in this would-be Buñuelian study of a hunted man returning to a state of primitive savagery in the African jungle. Overtones pretentious, but it tries. (Ken Gampu, Gert Van Den Berg. Technicolor, Panavision.)

***NEVADA SMITH** (Paramount) The early life of the silent movie cowboy from *The Carpetbaggers*, who turns out to be a half-breed Indian bent on revenge. Visually striking, but it's a long haul before vengeance is satisfied. (Steve McQueen, Karl Malden, Brian Keith, Arthur Kennedy; director, Henry Hathaway. Eastman Colour, Panavision.)

***ORCHID FOR THE TIGER, AN** (Golden Era) Chabrol among the spies again. This one, *Le Tigre se parfume à la Dynamite* (badly dubbed, by the way), lacks some of the wit and invention of its predecessors but makes up for it in elegance and is beautifully photographed by Jean Rabier. (Roger Hanin, Margaret Lee, Roger Dumas. Eastman Colour.)

PAWNBROKER, THE (Planet) Strident and schematic drama about old pawnbroker's painful memories of the war, tricked up with all kinds of new wave time gimmicks. A sad example of what happens when a talented American director tries to make a real "art" movie. (Rod Steiger, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Brock Peters; director, Sidney Lumet.)

*****ROUND-UP, THE** (Contemporary) A Hungarian prison camp in the 1860's, with the guards trying to sniff out members of a famous outlaw band. Forget any dampening preconceptions about East European prison films: this one is bold, elliptical, astonishingly fine to look at, and worked out like championship chess. (János Görbe, Tibor Molnár, András Kozák; director, Miklós Jancsó. Agascope.)

***RUSSIANS ARE COMING THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING, THE** (United Artists) Havoc in a New England village, when a Russian submarine grounds on a sandbank and the crew ventures ashore. Comedy with a strong flavour of old Ealing (William Rose wrote the script); rather amiable, even though the film—like its title—seems to repeat most things twice. (Carl Reiner, Eva Marie Saint, Alan Arkin; director, Norman Jewison. DeLuxe Color, Panavision.)

****SIGNE DU LION, LE** (Connoisseur) Eric Rohmer's haunting study of how a penniless American, left alone in a hot summer Paris, finds it all too easy to become a tramp without really trying. Brilliantly photographed by Nicholas Hayer. (Jess Hahn, Michèle Girardon.) Reviewed.

SPITTING IMAGE, THE (Contemporary) Ingenious story, about a man who coincidentally encounters his double during the wartime occupation of Holland, thumpingly mishandled by Fons Rademakers. The central character contrives to seem miscast in both roles; Coutard's photography, though, retains a measure of eerie fascination. (Lex Schoorel, Mia Goossen. Franscope.)

***THIS PROPERTY IS CONDEMNED** (Paramount) Natalie Wood going to rack and ruin in Tennessee Williams country. Quite watchable in a glazed sort of way, though the original one-act, two-character play has been Opened Up, as they say, and systematically drained of its meagre store of poetry. (Robert Redford, Mary Badham, Charles Bronson; director, Sydney Pollack. Technicolor.)

***TO LOVE** (Amanda) Zbigniew Cybulski and Harriet Andersson, an unlikely pair, provide enjoyable bedroom embellishments to Jörn Donner's shorthand, sometimes perfunctory, view of Scandinavian ethics. It doesn't quite come off but makes good watching, thanks particularly to Sven Nykvist's photography. Reviewed.

***TORN CURTAIN** (Rank) Paul Newman as a scientist who fakes defection to East Germany, with Julie Andrews in anxious attendance. Opens in Hitchcock's suavest enigmatic style; then limps downhill to an escape climax which suggests neither Hitchcock nor the secret police were really trying. (Lila Kedrova, Hansjoerg Felmy. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

TRAP, THE (Rank) Backwoods melodrama of French Canadian trapper taming and being tamed by his mute woman. Fine location photography, but direction stodgy and characterisation crude. (Oliver Reed, Rita Tushingham; director, Sidney Hayers. Eastman Colour, Panavision.)

***WALK, DON'T RUN** (BLC/Columbia) Polished remake of *The More the Merrier*, set this time in Tokyo in the middle of the Olympic Games. Cary Grant is an engaging matchmaker and Charles Walters' direction really only flags towards the end. (Samantha Eggar, Jim Hutton. Technicolor, Panavision.)

****WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?** (Warner-Pathé) Surprisingly successful screen version of Edward Albee's storming play about married life on the campus. Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton manage the marathon screaming match with relish. (George Segal, Sandy Dennis; director, Mike Nichols.) Reviewed.

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